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LADY STELLA AND HER LOVER.

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LADY STELLA

AND HER LOVER.

BY

HENRY SOLLY,

AUTHOR OF "CHARLES DAYRELL," &c.

". . . . Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat.
* * * * * * *
Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,
On from island unto island, at the gateways of the day.
Larger constellations burning, mellow moons, and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.
Never comes the trader, never floats a European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag;
Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea."

TENNYSON. *Locksley Hall.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

London:
WARD & DOWNEY,
12, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.
1888.

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LADY STELLA AND HER LOVER.

CHAPTER I.

YES—it was a brilliant ball which was given that warm night in June, 187—. At least everybody said so. How could it be otherwise? A Fancy-dress ball at the Countess of Glenalvon's in the height of the season!—This revival of a somewhat ancient but most charming festival was certainly a bright idea.

There were many guests present, thronging the spacious rooms in varied and splendid costumes; innumerable coloured lamps, Chinese lanterns, and brilliant sun-lights; beautiful flowers and flowering shrubs in profusion, capital music, graceful dancing with old-fashioned minuets and "Sir Roger de Coverley" at intervals; rivers of champagne and "all the delicacies of the season." Charming little alcoves and conservatories naturally predestined for subdued conversation and more or less serious flirtations; above all, lovely women and agreeable men. What more could be desired by mortal man?

There was one young mortal man among the

guests, however, in a Spenserian dress—which by-the-bye was generally supposed to indicate Hamlet as the wearer—who when he was young, as he pensively remarked to an intimate friend, had immensely enjoyed all æsthetic delights of a refined description, but on this occasion was wandering restlessly about, like one distraught. The said friend, an old Oxford chum, encountering him with mild surprise and pleasure, chaffed him on too closely resembling the Prince of Denmark, for "man delights you not, nor evidently, women either, nor this brave o'erhanging firmament, fretted with golden and Chinese fire. Yet, my dear fellow," continued his friend, "here is a fine opportunity for indulging in that 'Worship of Joy'—*pardon*, I forgot your father was lately murdered by a usurping King of Denmark. Well, well—

> 'Life's a jest, and all things show it—
> Most of all to a sucking poet,
> You thought so once, and now you know it
>
> 'And constancy lives in realms above,
> And life is thorny and youth is vain.'

Farewell. You taught me apt quotations and must take the consequences."

Sad to say the melancholy poet or prince refused to be comforted, and responded not to his friend's chaff, save by a compassionate glance. He was ambitious, dreamy, highly-gifted, self-centred (not self-indulgent), foolishly romantic, just twenty-four, and passionately in love. There were probably

ninety and nine young men that night, extremely like him, in Oxford, Cambridge, London, Boston, U.S., and Berlin. But he was none the less to be pitied for that reason—thought his friend (who figured as one of Charles I.'s cavaliers)—and who, though cynical, had much regard for poor Hamlet in spite of himself. He was about to make one more attempt to cheer him up before parting by another appropriate, though not exactly novel, quotation, when the prince or embryo poet whispered suddenly:

"I say, Ellerslie, who's that infernal fool aping Francis I. standing up to waltz with—"

"Don't know. Never had much acquaintance with fools—except one—(*sotto voce*). Turn your thoughts away, my friend. Listen to a writer who, certainly, was no fool:

> 'The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men,
> A thousand hearts beat happily. . . .'

Then why not thine, poetic friend?"—No answer, so he continued:

> " . . . . And when
> Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
> Soft eyes looked love to eyes that spake again,
> And all went merry as a marriage-bell.'

"Depend upon it *your* marriage-bell will ring some day, old fellow, and if you haven't picked a quarrel with me by that time, I'll dance at your wedding."

"I rather doubt it," replied the Melancholy One. "Thank you, however, all the same—for nothing.

Eyes soft or hard don't now-a-days look love to any other eyes, as far as my experience goes."

"Your vision is slightly limited. There is more than one pair of eyes here to-night, if I'm not much mistaken, that would speak again if the author of a certain new poem spake to them in love fashion. But talking of hard and soft," added the Oxford friend, seeing the poet look a little impatient, "have you heard the last new riddle? No? Well then, what is the difference between hard water and soft? My laundress in Lincoln's Inn told me this morning in confidence, that she heard her little boy say to his father last night—'Daddy, I hear mother talk about hard and soft water; what is hard water?' 'Now don't you think, sir,' she added, 'he must be rather a clever child?' 'But what did your husband answer?' I inquired; 'Oh, he said, "Ice, my boy." 'Then what is soft water?' said the child; 'Why, woman's tears,' says I—'to be sure.' 'Ah, Mrs. Privet,' I replied, 'with such a mother, your son ought to become a great man.'"

"Oh, come!" exclaimed Hamlet, with recovered animation, "that's too good to be true! But thanks for inventing it. I am better already. Nevertheless, the worship of Joy is not for this '*sub-luna*-tic *spere*,' as I believe your laundress would call it. And you awaken painful thoughts. Tears! I have rarely beheld woman's tears—hope I never shall again. They do weep, I believe, however—but only when men are unkind."

"Oh yes; I've been told they do occasionally when they cannot get a new bonnet, or their own way, or when deluded men don't propose."

"Ah! that betrays the weakness of their sex; but all the suppositions imply male cruelty."

"Not much of that weakness, I suspect," replied Ellerslie, "in a certain lady of your and my acquaintance. I see she's here to-night. Great power of resistance in her, eh? Sturdy and self-willed, though elegant."

"Don't be profane."

"Forgive me; I am only compassionate, and grieve to see so good a fellow——"

But the mournful poet moved disdainfully away.

Two stalwart young fellows, in "Hotspur" and "Prince Hal" attire, one of them with a well-bronzed face and military bearing, the other with a very unmediæval eye-glass in his eye, next sauntered by.

"So this is a Fancy ball. Only fancy," remarked the military individual, in the fashionable flippant style. "But, I say, Lynnecourt, who *is* that handsome girl in a Hungarian costume, with a diamond star on her forehead? I'm new just now to England, you know, but I met her the other night in a crowd at the French ambassador's, and, by Jove, I found she haunted me."

"Oh! that's Lady Stella Faulconhurst, but to-night known only as the Princess Silver Star—Transylvanian fairy princess, I suppose. Handsome—yes, I believe you, and fine figure. Good-looking fellow

waltzing with her. They call him Francis I., whoever that may be. Young Lord Edendale, in the Foreign Office, you know. Queer fish! Did you hear of his doings at the 'Devonshire' the night before last? Magnificent dress! But you seem absorbed!"

"I am, in wondering now who that wiry, sallow-faced young fellow, dark hair, can be—got up as Hamlet, isn't he? Look, he's watching that couple waltzing, like an Italian innamorato or the bravo he's just hired. Eyes like a cat-o'-mountain's."

"Oh, yes! That's young Dayrell, late of Oriel—grandson of old Charlie Dayrell. Did you ever hear of that eccentric genius?"

"I should think so. Had him pointed out to me when I was in Rome five years ago. He was quite the old man then, but a fine, plucky old dog. They say he rode to hounds till he was nearly eighty."

"That's the man. Your Italian bravo has a deuce of a lot of the warm Dayrell blood in him, but none of their sunny sparkle. I never can make him out, and don't want to. Mother was younger daughter of the Duke of ——; dropped the courtesy title when she married because her husband hadn't got one."

"What bosh!"

"Her son inherits eccentricity from all sides. He was desperately unsociable at Oxford, except with a very small clique. Never touches a card, I believe. 'Smiles sarcastic' if you talk of women or suggest a lark."

"Ah, I can believe it. He looks a deal too good for my taste. Sulky and misanthropic, eh? Hasn't got the Dayrell physique either."

"No; but he's a regular devil at polo and in the pink. But here comes the Star-Princess and her enamoured swain."

The speakers formed a part of the crowd of young men who sauntered and buzzed about in the gilded "salons" of the West End that season. They were "eldest sons," one of a celebrated sporting baronet, the other of an eminent Conservative peer, but were not otherwise particularly distinguished. They had been at Eton together, and a similarity of tastes made them associates in amusements, folly and mischief—not friends. The heir to the country baronet was in the Guards, had been in some African campaign, came home invalided, and since then had been on the Continent, rehabilitating. He had lately returned to London in time for the usual round of "society" doings in May and June.

When the dancers had passed, and the young officer had given a long lingering gaze at the Princess's retreating form, he softly ejaculated:

"I say, that girl's one to give a fellow the heart-ache. Whose daughter is she?" and he began moving away to the refreshment quarter.

"The late Earl of Clevedon had the honour of being her sire. But he departed this life years ago, and her mother afterwards married Sir Michael Ronhead, M.F.H., of Hurstleigh Manor, when this

damsel was a mere chit. Her mother died before the girl was out of the nursery, and as she has neither brother or sister, she'll inherit both properties."

"Crickey! what a catch!"

"So-so. They are both heavily encumbered. I've inquired, and don't believe she'll have a clear six or seven thousand a year."

The young men by this time had gained the supper-room, and saw the lady and her partner engaged in lively conversation by the side-board. A bright young maiden, "Queen Mab," just then came up with her partner to Lady Stella.

"Who is that pretty girl?" asked the officer.

"That's a cousin, I believe, of Lady Stella, who lives chiefly at Hurstleigh Manor. Rather captivating, eh? But, I say, don't stare at 'that bright particular diamond star' quite so hard, or her lover will, &c."

"Not much return in store for him," replied the officer, "judging by the keen, pitiless look in the lady's great eyes. Cold, cold as Artemis—and as cruel."

"Cruel, if you like; but cold, no. If you had heard her singing the other night at Lady B——'s, you'd have said there was fire enough in her to thaw the Caucasus, or a dozen London dandies."

The Lady Stella, arm-in-arm with her partner, now passed on, her shapely head, covered with its auburn locks, a little thrown back, the star fixed above her broad white forehead flashing hither and

thither brightly enough, yet scarcely more so than the pair of eyes beneath, while, though the nose from its Grecian form was unable to turn up in scorn at all the folly of the world, the beautiful short upper lip was equal to expressing any amount of that sentiment, all the more so from frequent practice. Her fortunate (or unfortunate) partner so contemptuously alluded to by the heir to the Conservative nobleman, was a lively and energetic specimen of the English aristocracy. Like a few more of his companions, he divided his time this particular season between ardent attentions to the young lady with whom he had just been waltzing, discussions and speculations concerning Ascot, or Goodwood, and the refreshment buffet at the Criterion, the Pavilion, or at any fashionable mansion wherein he might be "chasing the laughing hours with flying feet." Yet in some respects he was superior to many of his *confrères*. Tall and handsome, lively yet sentimental, he wrote beautiful verses, and even went occasionally to church—frequently, in fact, when his mother or sisters asked his arm to conduct them to a very fashionable ritualistic place of worship in their neighbourhood. Quite recently he had fallen desperately in love with the Lady Stella Faulconhurst, who occasionally attended there, and wooed her with all the ardour and quasi-chivalry of his nature. And, no doubt, there had once been the making of a fine character in him, but neither the moral or

intellectual element appeared to have been cultivated. He had rattled through youth at Harrow, and early manhood at Cambridge, without learning much at either, except to love poetry, art, and cricket on the æsthetic and "play-impulse" department of his nature, and that he must take care of "Number One" as regarded the serious side of life. Hence, when he was attracted by the peerless maiden with the auburn hair and pitiless eyes, who was somewhat painfully aware that she attracted men's admiration wherever she went, his love was rather of the superficial and selfish order, though he fully himself believed he was a model of a knightly lover and something of a poet. There was no depth, no real manliness, no true chivalry, in either his poetry or his love. But the Lady Stella, when a young girl making her first appearance in society, had been fascinated by his good looks, winning manners, and reputation as "one of the most rising young men of the day." When he first asked her to dance, she trembled with pleasure. His poems were laid under her pillow, and she furtively read every notice of his writings, or his doings, of which she could obtain possession.

Fortunately for her, the object of her secret admiration was altogether ignorant of it, and was at that time himself in love with a popular actress. So Lady Stella, having heard a little about his views of women generally, and seen

through the superficial varnish of his character, recovered from her delusion before he, in his turn, awoke to the perception of her growing beauty, and queenly intellectual graces. Thus it fell out that when at length he sought her among the crowd of elegant and charming girls at balls or garden-parties, plaintively pleaded for a third or fourth dance, whispered sweet nonsense in her ear, and sent her brilliant or pathetic rhymes, she described him as "whipped cream" — a *sobriquet* that stuck to him for two seasons—began to despise herself for the fleeting fancy of her girlish unsophisticated days, and disliked him heartily for having made such a fool of her. At first, no doubt, she had struggled angrily and unsuccessfully against what she regarded as a mere degrading glamour; but this season she met him with a complacent smile ("very like that," as Ellerslie suggested, "on the face of the amiable animal with whom a 'young lady of Riga' ventured to take a ride, returning in a sheltered compartment,"*) and a triumphant consciousness of freedom in her heart. So the young lordling found the Fancy-ball that night unsatisfactory, felt he had better raise

* "There was a young lady of Riga,
Who went for a ride on a tiger,
They came back from their ride—
The lady inside,
And a smile on the face of the tiger."

The wittiest product, as some think, of the Nineteenth century—with apologies to Mr. Lear.

the siege for the present and renew it on a more propitious occasion—which perhaps never came.

In the meantime Lady Stella, as her cousin gravely remarked to herself on returning one Sunday from church, was "as a bird escaped out of the snare of the fowler."

Yet, when her early idol-worship was shattered in the dust, there was nothing of a nobler cult to take its place. She was considered by her family and her one or two intimate friends to be sadly devoid alike of religious feelings and belief; and as she disliked going to church or reading devotional books, and gave a wide berth to all clergymen and the meetings and societies with which they were connected, she also began to consider herself "a hopeless infidel." With her usual spirit of independence—not to say, defiance—she rejoiced in assuming a hostile attitude towards what she could not heartily embrace, from which, in fact, she often shrank with mingled fear and aversion, lest it might enslave her soul and bind her again in what she thought would be only another form of the cringing human idolatry from which she had so recently escaped.

The fact is she had been brought up since her mother's death under the fostering care of an exemplary high-class governess, of strictly evangelical principles and lady-like deportment, whom, as her pupil advanced from the nursery to the school-room, Stella regarded with increasing disap-

proval. Indeed it is to be feared that this precocious young lady, when scarcely in her teens, looked on the exemplary governess not only with antipathy but even with amusement and contempt. For unfortunately she perceived, and doubtless (with the impertinence of ill-regulated youth) exaggerated, the various little selfish weaknesses and unamiable infirmities of temper which, from the want of Christian charity and consideration for others, to say nothing of generosity, unhappily marked that lady's character. Hence it is not surprising that on her sixteenth birthday Stella persuaded her affectionate step-father to give the stately governess her *congé*, and to invite his widowed sister, Mrs. Grey, with her daughter Frances, to come and reside a considerable part of each year at the Manor-house.

Under this arrangement, however, it was stipulated that the Lady Stella, (cunning little puss,) should be absolute mistress of the household, under her father's suzerainty, and that her aunt and cousin were simply there as guests. Thus becoming practically her own mistress, at too early an age, this wild, proud, and headstrong girl had a pernicious liberty of development which, but for the restraint put upon it by a naturally noble and high-minded disposition, might have had, some would say did have, highly disastrous results.

For among her other vagaries was the style in which she insisted on pursuing her own education,

especially in the theological line. That education was certainly very fitful and diversified in its character. She read a vast variety of books indiscriminately, and voraciously studied eagerly and successively, for a few months at a time, under able day-governesses and tutors, mathematics, history, astronomy, mental philosophy, even political economy, and whatever in addition they recommended. But naturally, alas, she soon wearied of them all, except history, which with poetry, biography, and polemical theology of a destructive character, alone seemed to retain for her any permanent interest.

About the time now referred to, when in her twentieth year, Lady Stella's interest was deeply engrossed (except just during the London season) by eager researches into all the newest revelations of modern theological criticism. Scientific exposures of the historical and mythical absurdities, errors, and fallacies of the Bible, of the impossibility of miracles, of the endless contradictions, inconsistencies, and futilities of Christianity, demonstrations even of the groundlessness of a belief in a personal God, knowable at least by human intellect, of Agnosticism, in short, in any form, were especially sweet to her soul. She smiled contemptuously on all the dreams and "unreal imaginings" of the poets and seers concerning what is called "Revealed religion"—was quite sure she recognized in herself none of those deep

spiritual wants paraded by goody-goody folks, and which she regarded as mere weak superstitions. But the ancient myths and legends of India, and especially of Greece, she still delighted in. She could revel in them without fear of being superstitious; besides, they helped to show the absurdity of the prevalent Christian myths.

"What a very disagreeable sort of person!" some excellent people will say. Nay; not so. Stella Faulconhurst was one of those characters who attract us, in spite of ourselves, and as powerfully as they repel. Hence, she kept all, who knew her intimately, in a state of alternate delight and distress, of love and aversion, or even indignation. Those who could appreciate the higher elements of her character, knew that she was full of the noblest aspirations, of generous and unselfish impulses, capable of the most devoted self-sacrifice and love. Wildly romantic, enthusiastic, imaginative, the over-mastering passion of her heart seemed to be for freedom, independence, power, with all other conditions requisite for possessing and rejoicing in things beautiful and true. She thirsted for knowledge as the hunted hart for the water-brooks—would have welcomed with delight (as she believed) all hardships and perils, which might beset her in a daring quest of truth and beauty; almost any adventures, in fact, from which most of her sex would shrink in fear. But as for humble, humdrum goodness, piety, domestic affection, and offices of ministering toil, what concern had she with mouldy rubbish of this kind? Of

social evils she was either entirely ignorant, or scarcely recognized their existence; for her whole temperament and nature resolutely resisted, ignored, or trampled on the faintest suggestions of the baseness and corruption that were in the world. As for piety, we have seen the subject was for her altogether out of the range of reality. And domestic life, with its affections and conventionalities, bonds and drudgery, was nearly as repugnant to her "being's end and aim," as the cage to the freed skylark, singing and soaring in the blue depths of heaven.

Yet this scornful sceptical maiden had been known more than once to go secretly to nurse a poor sick woman in the village through a long weary night, or to keep a lot of little dirty children amused for an hour together by a poor cottage fire, that they might not disturb some sufferer in the room above, stifling, in her ardent desire to help, all her natural disgust at such surroundings, and any fears or warnings about the danger of infection. No doubt she heartily despised herself for yielding to such impulses when the excitement of native benevolence had passed away; yet she was just as ready to do the same, or greater, services for any one lying wounded by the wayside of life, on some other occasion; though fitfully, it must be admitted, and with caprice. But woe to the blundering booby of either sex, particularly if it were an innocent and Pharisaic young curate, who might, unluckily, discover the lady's weakness, and presume to compliment her on her behaviour.

Poor child! The mother who, in the language of an ancient Hebrew enthusiast, might have "guided her feet into the way of peace," was too soon taken away. Her step-father was dotingly fond of her—when he saw her; but his fatherly attentions were rather intermittent, and were seldom exhibited during six months of the year, except for half-an-hour at breakfast and dinner, or again when she awoke him from his evening nap to hand him a cup of tea.

During the hunting season, however, when old enough to be lifted on to a Shetland pony, and be led by a groom to a neighbouring "meet," Stella came in for a considerable increase of those attentions which appeared to wax and wane according to her riding capacities and her interest in fox-hunting generally. That interest, in her early years, was prodigious; so that, between Sir Michael and herself (though, as she thought, he was sometimes very obstinate and troublesome) there was a great deal of warm regard and sympathy. The M. F. H. was proud of his clever, *distinguée* daughter, who, when in her teens, could ride nearly as straight across the country, if she chose, as he could himself. He frequently brought her little presents, devised amusements for her, and let her have her own way, for the most part in everything, which was to her thinking, best of all. "Only now and then," as he once expressed it confidentially to an old friend, "I pull her up sharp on the curb, you see, just to keep up discipline."

Of course, when those daring researches of the young lady into the mysterious theological speculations just mentioned gradually became known in the family circle, her conduct was as perplexing to the good Sir Michael as it was alarming to her hunt and cousin. In the eyes of these ladies it so closely resembled the proceedings of their common grandmother Eve, that fatal consequences of some description must be expected to ensue. A sharp peremptory interdict was at length obtained by Mrs. Grey from her brother, which, however, was met by the daughter of Eve with such unexpected resistance, and caused such unpleasant results to both the "high contracting parties," that ere very long it was allowed to fall into abeyance, and the wilful girl continued her explorations among the "forbidden-fruit" trees. When, in the course of the lively discussions which took place during the first outbreak of this civil war, Stella was confronted with the narrative in the book of Genesis, and solemnly warned as to the sad consequences which had once resulted from plucking the fruit of the tree of knowledge, it seems she replied with a hardihood and acuteness astounding to her distressed relatives that it is only by knowing good and evil that we can learn to embrace the one and eschew the other. The young lady was dancing "a sword-dance," and the naked blades were rather risky.

Happily her burly jovial step-father was a man of the finer type of old English country gentlemen,

and beneath all his boisterous freedom and sporting hilarity there was a ground-work of high principle with a definite standard of honour and moral worth, limited, but very genuine, and often, (though not invariably,) found in the fox-hunting, game-preserving squires of a past generation. Then, again, her aunt's character, manners, and views of moral philosophy, though like her brother's rather limited, were essentially lady-like, motherly, gentle, and refined. Lady Stella from infancy felt the shaping force and benefit of influences such as these, and in addition, inherited a sense of her high family traditions, with a profound consciousness of the truth that *noblesse oblige*.

CHAPTER II.

THOSE fortunate persons who may have attentively perused the imperfect record given some years ago of the pure Bacchantic life of a certain Oxford student named CHARLES DAYRELL, will possibly remember that nearly at the close of that record there is a quotation from a letter written by an old friend of his, a Mr. Rivers, to one of his grandsons, then at Eton. The hint contained in that letter, explanatory of the peaceful and even cheerful submission with which the once impetuous, daring, worshipper of Dionysus accepted the increasing privations of helpless age, may possibly be interesting to aged pilgrims, but why the writer of the said letter called the young Etonian "a fine lad," anyone might have been puzzled to explain. The boy was slightly built, not tall for his age, cut no great figure in the cricket-ground, and in fact, but for his face and head, would have been called insignificant-looking. Certainly he had a fine countenance and a rather remarkable mass of brain behind it, so that the really fine, tall lads who carried all before them at cricket and football were rather disgusted at finding themselves constantly inferior to Wilfrid Dayrell in the class-room,

and there, figuratively, sitting at his feet. But the writer of the letter above referred to had probably noted the lad's enthusiastic love and reverence for his grandfather, as well as his rather extraordinary intellectual powers, and was judging him by a higher than a muscular standard. When the boy began to realize his inferiority in all athletic prowess to his ancestor he was mortified just in proportion to his admiration and love for the old man, and for a time no intellectual triumphs seemed any consolation. Yet there was one line in which he *could* emulate him—he could *ride*—ride to hounds and in steeple-chases, though long solitary gallops over moor and mountain pleased him best. He could ride the fastest, the fiercest, the most vicious horses that were offered him. He refused ever to be beaten—never rested till he had mastered the most obstinate or dangerous brutes to be found, whether at Eton, Oxford, or on his native country side. The vision of his grandfather's delight in "noble horsemanship" rose ever before him; and the thought that in this, at least, he might be not an unworthy descendant of his great exemplar, consoled him under many an ignominious failure in other manly exercises.

As he grew up, however, and gained considerable increase of bodily vigour, he went in for a few athletic sports with resolute pluck, and specially distinguished himself in the running and "high jump" competitions. But he did it all in honour

of the illustrious dead, not from love of the sports themselves—never became popular with his companions either at school or college, and evidently had no desire to be so. Looking back in after-life on bygone years, he makes a curious confession. In a queer kind of diary, kept under circumstances to be hereafter explained, he says, "I believe that in those days I was very unsociable, with savage tendencies that often made me decidedly 'nasty' in my temper and conduct. I wonder now how I made or kept any friends at all. Yet heaven knows how I longed for love, not for applause, nor even esteem, nor for the affection and regard of above three or four of my own sex—not much even for theirs. I liked talking and especially arguing with them if they were clever, well-read men. But behind all that I know there was a passionate craving for love—woman's love. With men I often felt cross and snappish—with women, never; even when they were vain and silly I was happy in their company, felt drawn towards them whatever their rank or want of outward attractions, unless indeed they were unfeminine." No wonder if women, therefore, were usually attracted to him.

"'My child,' said Dr. Doddridge once to his little daughter; 'how is it that everybody loves you?'

"'I don't know, papa,' replied the little maid, unless it is that I love everybody.'

"Hard, arrogant, domineering women," he adds, "I hated as David hated the enemies of the Lord,

that is, with perfect hatred; but, thank God, such as these are rare. Yet a proud woman, if otherwise feminine and attractive, one regards with profound interest, and perhaps admiration."

One other passage from what some would call a strange farrago of romantic enthusiasm, egotism, and aspiration, a wild echo of his grandsire's Dionysiac song, may perhaps be given here as throwing a little light on the young Oxonian's subsequent fate and fortunes. It seems to have been written shortly after returning from his first Continental trip.

"Yes, the Worship of Joy, of wild and daring adventure, the passionate desire to mingle and blend with all the beauty and glory of the universe, how it fills one's heart and brain! And oh, how grandly that desire is fed by wandering in the pine woods and on the mountain tops, o'er the Brocken and the Jungfrau, and on the shores and the waters of the lakes of Switzerland, of Italy, by the blue waves of Ocean in sunshine, by moonlight, and in the storm! . . . . There, indeed, one seems to mingle with the Eternal Beauty, Grandeur, Love. . . . And who has fed this glorious life in our souls more powerfully, more exquisitely, than Byron in his nobler moods! . . . Well might my beloved grandfather have honoured that man and his poetry, and God be thanked that his devoted admiration has kindled mine!"

* * * * *

"What a wondrous power Nature exerts over us when, with her spells of enchantment, she transports us into a realm of radiant blessedness, in which we behold vast and misty visions of such exceeding joy and loveliness—visions, too, in which we seem to live a sublime, far-reaching existence, wherein we gain all knowledge, pierce to the heart of all mysteries, win all love and power, and walk triumphantly through a universe of worshipping, grateful disciples, adorers — continually drawing nearer and nearer to the Central Source and Fountain of all Light, and Love, and Power. . . . Then there were seasons when I seemed to approach very nigh, also, to gentle, loving hearts, to all who were full of womanly grace and beauty and tenderness. . . . But there was one, only one living, breathing form that at length remained continuously by my side in those sweet visions, and she—how can I speak of that ineffable brightness, sweetness, tender grace and love . . . ! Yet, like the sea, so soft and smiling in the sunshine —ah, it can change to tempest and grandest storm."

* * * * *

The writer's emotions appear to have prevented any further entries in his journal for many days.

Wild and intellectually lawless as were evidently this young fellow's aims and passions, yet vice was always associated in his mind with coarseness and with a certain baseness of character which inspired

him only with scorn and loathing. Hence it was resolutely, or rather, instinctively by him avoided. Wilfrid Dayrell's romantic aspirations and lofty dreams preserved him from the corruption of the world around him; but they could not protect him from the extravagant idolatry, the exaggerated estimates and imaginings, the feverish ambitions, and romantic restless yearnings, which had dominated his mind through boyhood and youth with increasing violence to the period now described.

Young Dayrell had left his University amid an accumulation of honours which would have turned the head of a less cynical victor. A high place in the schools, a double first-class in classics and history, were not the whole of his achievements. The Newdigate prize poem was adjudged to be the production of his brilliant fancy, though that is not necessarily saying very much for it—and his recitation of that poem, coupled with his other successes, drew down shouts of applause even from gownsmen who heartily disliked the man, though they thus generously extolled the victor. His family connections and social position gave him at once, on coming to London, an entrance into so-called "good society," and before long the Lady Stella heard on every side the brief buzz of popular eulogium which resounded through fashionable gatherings wherever the young "Oxonian *triumphans*" moved. The women, with the exception of two or three acidulated dowagers, univer-

sally pronounced him "a most interesting young man," "bearing the stamp of genius in every feature," and for a few months he was discussed, invited, flattered in many quarters admission to which was coveted in vain by, perhaps, much worthier men. But the hero or victim of these attentions was unconscious of the flattering opinion they implied, altogether indifferent to them as regarded any personal vanity or pride. He rejoiced in them only as they brought him into delightful relations with highly cultivated men, and with women, the fairest of their sex among the "Upper Ten."

After a time, however, he found it was possible to have too much even of good things. He had previously known comparatively little of womankind. His mother was beloved in a way, and was above criticism—his young sisters were beneath it; and he began to think that possibly "distance" had "lent enchantment to the view." So that, though it was merely the extravagance of his worship that was checked, yet a certain amount of disillusionizing, no doubt, took place. But the aching void in young Dayrell's heart remained unfilled, and when he returned to the solitude of his rooms in the Albany, from some brilliant assembly, and sighed over the hollow mockery of happiness, as he began to regard it, with which the fashionable world regaled him, he longed more ardently than ever for those "Isles of the Blest," which, with the

true Dayrell instinct, he felt assured were somewhere to be found.

Was he right, then, he sometimes asked himself, in thus sighing for happiness, right in believing in that Worship of Joy which one whom he so deeply honoured had held up for universal devotion, especially for the acceptance of modern Englishmen, as no less fitting now than for early Greeks, in the Youth of the world? There was a strange fierce contest in his heart over that matter, for naturally he was always inclined to look on the dark side of things, to anticipate evil, and to revel in gloomy views of Providence, mankind, and life generally. This tendency had been fostered by desperate endeavours to write a tragic drama of dismal purpose in his various long vacations; but although his sense of the constant pressure or approach of evil filled his life with continually recurring gloom, it did not blast it with the worst of all agonies, Fear. He had inherited the Dayrell high-bred courage, and cherished it as one of his chief treasures. Whether the cynical stoicism which took the place of that ignoble cowardice that in some form afflicts so many otherwise pure and noble masculine souls, as well as women and children, sick people, and thieves was a happier or more righteous state of mind, might be a question that, as yet, had never occurred to him.

Another question, however, of some little moment to the happiness of himself and his friends, had

also not occurred to him, but nevertheless it had to be answered.

"Don't you think, Dayrell," said his Oxford friend, Fred Ellerslie, one day, "that you are rather an unforgiving sort of fellow? I should be sorry to fall out with you if it could be conveniently avoided, for I know you would never make it up again."

"Probably not, my dear old Diogenes, for you might be rude, and rudeness, let me tell you, is much harder to forgive than a serious injury. But if I didn't forgive you it would be because I should always esteem and like you to the end of the chapter, do what you would. If I didn't respect or care for you I should forgive you in the course of twenty-four hours, had you been ever so rude."

"That's one of your everlasting paradoxes," replied Ellerslie, with a slight touch of good-humoured contempt. "But you mean well, and knowing my own worth, I accept your complimentary opinion of me—yet with gratitude. But your remark *is* paradoxical."

"Not a bit of it. Look here! I have great authority for it. One of the wisest of men (next, in fact, to Solomon), Lavater, the German sage, says 'He who forgives a trespass of sentiment to a friend is as unworthy of friendship as that friend himself.'"

"Oh, gammon!" exclaimed Ellerslie. "Don't you believe it; not for a moment."

"I do believe it, old boy, and shall to the day

of my death, and have acted upon it, and will again, *ad infinitum*." Perhaps he was wrong, after all, and lived to see that even the wisest of men, including both Solomon and Lavater, may for once in their lives be fatally mistaken, thereby ruinously misleading many fools.

Yet Dayrell was no fool. Sad to say, our wisdom and our folly, our strength and weakness, our virtues and vices, appear to spring from the same root; and the evil that is in us doubtless works the greater mischief because it is often part of the out-come of all that is best and noblest in our characters. That was a good expression of the shrewd Frenchman's—"les défauts de ses qualités" —("*bonnes*" qualités, remember, being meant).

Dayrell had many "bonnes qualités," and certainly great abilities, but they had their "défauts."

When Ellerslie quoted the witty Frenchman's saying, Dayrell had capped it with a remark from an old dramatist—

"The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair if they were not cherished by our virtues."

"Splendid!" said Ellerslie. "Where did you get it?"

"From the man who knew and told us everything concerning human character and doings—the Swan of Avon, in 'All's well that ends well.'* And he put it in the mouth of a subordinate character—

* Act. iv., Sc. 3.

a man not even named. What boundless prodigality! Shakespeare makes all aspiring young Englishmen want to write dramas, and—despair of success."

"What a mercy," murmured Fred, "for us humbler folk, that Dayrell has a few *défauts* to whip his innumerable virtues!"

CHAPTER III.

Into the sphere, under the magnetic influence, of this strangely-gifted creature, came at length the Lady Stella, like the rest of her "set." Into his sphere, but not under his influence till after many meetings. She resembled him, indeed, so much in his cynicism and despairing views of life, in his indifference to popular approval and applause, that on those grounds she could not help being attracted towards him. But she shuddered at the thought of his poetry and romantic tendencies. She would have despised herself had she found she, too, was bowing in homage, with a number of silly girls, before this ridiculous young genius, who was probably only another rhymster like her early idol, but in a far less pleasing guise.

Nevertheless, the tale of his intellectual triumphs at Oxford had a strange charm, and when she condescended on some occasion to join a little circle of young friends who were conversing with him, she was drawn into the vortex of enjoyment in spite of herself, and went home secretly admitting that "this absurdly-lauded young lion-cub, after all, was rather fascinating."

Perhaps the awful "Nemesis of Faith," in the

august, mysterious recesses of her dread abode, knew well that both these individuals were of a nature too noble to be satisfied with mere negations, and that deep in their souls there might be an indestructible passionate desire, childish or child-like, for something they had not yet found.

The early days of their intercourse in society were not propitious. Greatly as Dayrell could not help sometimes being enamoured of the young lady, he yet every now and then felt towards her that indescribable antipathy which is so real when it occurs, and so difficult either to account for or overcome. Yet not so very difficult after all, to account for, if you look for an explanation in the right place.

One evening, in a small, select, and brilliant circle assembled at the house of a celebrated leader of fashion, Dayrell had been speaking with a subdued animation and earnestness that enchained the attention of several of that lady's guests; and then, with a simple and sublime unconsciousness, finished off his remarks by a striking and pathetic quotation in illustration of his views, from one of his own poems! When the murmur of interest and approval which followed had died away, Lady Stella, who had been one of the listeners, was heard asking her pretty cousin Frances if she was acquainted with Winthrop M. Praed's charming poems, especially one called "Beauty and her Visitors"—"that is," she added, "Lady Julia (their lovely hostess) and ourselves."

"Oh, do let us hear it!" exclaimed two or three voices.

"I remember only what happened to one of her visitors," answered Stella, "and I think it runs thus:

'Then Genius snatched his golden lute,
And told a tale of Love and Glory;
The crowd around were hushed and mute
To hear so sad and sweet a story.
And Beauty marked the minstrel's cheek,
So very pale—no bust was paler—
Vowed she could listen for a week—
But really he *should* change his tailor.'"

Amid the hearty laughter of most of the listeners —some only smiled, and severely. Among these last was the pretty and sentimental, yet frivolous young cousin, to whom the quotation had been chiefly addressed, and who took the first opportunity of whispering to Lady Stella:

"It's bad enough for a man to sniff and scoff at sentiment and sacred things, but in a woman it's horrid. To make mock of love, and worship, and religion, as you do——"

"Is a superfluity of naughtiness, I grant," interrupted Stella. "Yet the object of your love and worship, Mr. Wilfrid, the sublime and beautiful, himself does the same."

The cousin, blushing, turned away with a pained and scornful denial, adding angrily:

"Do you not see you have forced the young man to leave the room? For shame!"

The Princess Silver-Star (as she was called since the fancy-ball) did not, however, appear to feel any sense of shame, but rather to enjoy her triumph. Nevertheless, Frances noticed a few days later that she took an early opportunity of asking Mr. Dayrell's forgiveness in so sweet, yet comical a manner, that it is a wonder that gentleman did not find, experimentally, the truth of an old classic quotation respecting the *Amantium iræ* so sedulously instilled into every Eton schoolboy (at one end or the other), and, indeed, every student of that immortal grammar.

But find it, he didn't; and for a time nursed his wrath and vexed his wounded feelings.

Nevertheless, an impressionable, imaginative young man like our poet, who had once been desperately in love with such a girl as Stella Faulconhurst, could not behold her striking face and figure whenever they met, or listen to her singing, her conversation, her quizzing, and her wit, unmoved—especially when he caught her speaking eyes fixed on himself, as he answered in his curt, incisive fashion some of the clever questions propounded by a little circle of amused or admiring guests.

There were, indeed, many points of similarity between the Star-princess and himself—a circumstance, however, which it has been remarked does not always tend to attract, though it does conduce to swift mutual understanding. Both of them despised the homage they called forth; still more

that craving desire for it or for any kind of popular applause, and which they saw tormenting the lives of the less highly-gifted beings, both men and women around them.

The fact is, the lady was weary of the admiration of empty-headed coxcombs, of their frivolous chatter, their slang and smoking, their "horsey" talk and muscular athletic prowess; especially of their ill-concealed and base delight in ballet-dancers and burlesques. If there was anywhere on earth a nobler life lived by human beings, she knew little of it, save when she happened to read in the newspapers of the rescue of drowning men by life-boats in a raging storm: and while she generally respected the "matrons" of society, the young ladies she regarded with kindly but ill-concealed contempt. "Vanity of vanities! all is vanity," was her favourite quotation, and the only settled article of her creed. Wilfrid Dayrell shared her weariness and disappointment concerning all earthly enjoyments, and to some extent in regard to all ordinary articles of religious belief. Like her, he was suffering from the reaction of disappointed love—a first love. But in his case it had been the love, not of mortal maiden, but of an ideal—the love of Beauty, of Joy, and of Nature—and then of all the surroundings and aims of University life, of all that the enthusiasm and genius of his grandfather had fostered in his young soul. And from the glamour, the dreams, and the worship that

had thus for a time filled his whole being, he awoke to despise and scorn — with what the elder Dayrell would have regarded as miserable blindness—alike himself and his idols, his worship and his faith. When in the darkness of the night he lifted his eyes to the silent stars, and despairingly asked why his state was so different from that of the noble dead—the hero of the Dionysiac cult—an answer came. But he heard it not. The difference between a life self-centred, and one spent for others, was not, yet, to him quite apparent.

Hence, both these young people were, or had recently been, in a highly advantageous position for making mock of faith, adoration, love. No doubt there were lucid intervals, especially in Dayrell's case, when they felt as strongly as ever, if not the old capacity for adoration and faith, yet the passionate longing to feel it. And as the young man found himself ever and anon unexpectedly sliding deeper and deeper into an admiration and thence into a passionate love and worship for the gifted, star-crowned maiden, he felt once again a capacity for true heart-worship of something beyond, and above, mortal and earthly charms, kindled within him. While as for the lady herself, she was certainly beginning to see that some, at least, of her contempt for all that she had heard called religion and worship was generated by the influences of the frivolous, debasing, or superstitious world in which, when in London, she had

chiefly lived. Thence she also was beginning to suspect that she had a dual existence, and to learn she was a different being in the sweet rural life of Hurstleigh Manor from that which London made her, or "London Society" conceived her to be.

If the course of Wilfrid Dayrell's love had run a little smoother, and had evoked a corresponding attachment in the lady's heart, they might perhaps, in spite of London Society, have even then discovered their way to those "Isles of Joy"—the new Atlantis—to that lofty realm of worship, faith, and love, aye and at length, perhaps, to that celestial peace, of which now, at intervals, they could only dream.

But Dayrell's love, whether true or transient, certainly did not run a very smooth course. And his exclamation to himself as he returned to his chambers after that evening party, when Lady Stella was quoting Praed, did not look at all favourable to such a consummation. "Unfeminine, sarcastic, arrogant! She wants to make everybody bow down, or give way, to her! '*Fœnum habet in cornu!*' I'm a fool if in future, at all events, I let myself be gored and tossed." Hence for a time antipathy was in the ascendant. Stella returned it with interest. For she could not endure what she fancied was his assumption of superiority, nor contentedly resign her supremacy in the social circle. She was piqued at what she thought his studied blindness to *her* claims of universal empire, showing

thereby, it may be, that he was not entirely an object of indifference to herself. But when he was sending up sky-rockets of brilliant epigrams, anecdote, and philosophic aphorism in the social circle, she could not help standing still to watch with something like admiration, and wistful sympathy, the sparkling coruscations of his youthful and fantastic genius.

Moreover, since in spite of all obstacles to friendly *rapprochement*, there were so many subjects of common and deep interest between them, it necessarily happened every now and then, each heard the other, when they met "in company," utter something that made their heart beat quickly and their eyes turn to each other instantaneously with swift sympathetic and joyous glance. And all the time they knew this sympathy was in spite of themselves, in spite of divers firm resolutions formed in cooler and solitary or angry hours.

CHAPTER IV.

One day, memorable to both, these ill-regulated young persons met at a garden party near Richmond. Dayrell was not yet quite sure whether he loved or hated Lady Stella when he was on his way thither, but he had very little doubt on the subject when he saw his "bright particular star" shining among a group of charming girls on the lawn, as far above them in brilliancy as Venus among her sister planets, and advancing one or two steps to greet him. Then in the course of the afternoon they opposed one another at lawn-tennis, and both being practised and very agile players, it was impossible to help admiring each other's remarkable skill, especially when after several hotly-contested games, the lady discovered that her side was defeated, mainly through the ubiquitous prowess of this young athlete. Then came a little music, and Dayrell listened entranced to Lady Stella's exquisite singing. Later on they found themselves, of course accidentally, thrown together in a ramble through the spacious grounds, and before they noticed that they were alone, somehow became absorbed in an exciting discussion concerning the old Greek games with all the abounding life and joy that characterized

them. Thence, antipathy lost for a time in a fathomless sea of mutual delight, they glided into the later history of that glorious nation, and found themselves in perfect sympathy of indignation over the continued cruel subjugation of some of its fairest provinces by the ruthless Turk. They joined in fervent aspirations for its complete emancipation and final restoration to the position it once held in Europe, ere the ferocious hordes from Central Asia conquered and crushed those lovely regions of Eastern Europe.

"It is the worship they gave to Beauty and Truth," said Lady Stella, half aloud, "which has won the admiration of the world."

"Yes," replied her companion, turning to her with a quick keen admiring glance. "And that is a worship which need be neither feared nor scorned. It cannot be claimed by Superstition——"

"Nor be defiled by Bigotry or Fear," added the lady.

Thereupon came an interval of meditation—each meandering along, lost in blissful reverie.

"But yet," said young Dayrell at length, "I doubt if a mere abstract cult like that would ever have secured to Greece her wonderful fascination over our Western hearts and minds. What is it that has given her Norman, Celt, and Saxon for willing adorers during all succeeding ages?"

"Her glorious legends," answered the lady with kindling enthusiasm. "Her fables, her poetry, all

bodying forth in concrete forms her worship of the Beautiful and Sublime."

"But—pardon me—how do you reconcile—I mean I have heard you decry, even severely denounce, worship and worshippers with indignant scorn."

"Have you?" replied Lady Stella, but her tone was not scornful now—rather it was softened, gentle, as if she were a little pleased that he should have noticed remarks of hers. "Ah, but that was when some of those terrible saints had been talking about what they call public worship and 'divine service,' and all the mummeries and shams those posture-masters, candle-worshippers, and orthodox milliners take refuge in to save themselves from some imaginary vengeful deity."

"But the ancient Greeks believed in vengeful deities" . . .

"True, but they did not, at the same time, with exquisite irony, call them, or any one of them, their 'Father in heaven.'"

"And oh, how pale and poor is the so-called worship of these modern Christians," replied Dayrell, "compared with that of the early Greeks."

"Aye, and how cold and lifeless," exclaimed his companion, now thoroughly roused, "are the imaginary objects of modern worship, and Christian fetichism, compared with the thought in the Grecian, still more in the Persian, mind concerning their gods? It may be all imagination, Mr. Dayrell, may it not? Both their and our gods exist only

in our own 'fond desiring souls,' as your favourite poet hath it—but I feel I could worship Apollo in the Sun, or Diana in that lovely moon, and even the sacred Fire itself, with all my heart and soul."

"Or the Goddess of Wisdom in some grand Parthenon, open to the stars."

"Or Dionysus in the purple vintage," added the lady, turning a momentary half-playful, half-sarcastic glance at her companion.

"Keep to the loftier realm, Lady Stella," replied Dayrell stoutly, "as your celestial name should teach you." He anticipated a frown or a glance of contempt, but was answered by a gracious smile.

Emerging from a shrubbery walk, they came upon a far-stretching view into Richmond Park with just a glimpse of a bit of the Surrey hills in the distance. Involuntarily they stopped and gazed in silence. Certainly it was a lovely scene. The Sun had lately set, and a silvery crescent moon floated over the place of his rest. The Evening Star in all its soft brilliancy was shining near her Queen.

"See," said Dayrell, "there is your prototype, looking up to its beautiful Sovereign Lady in worship and love—itself the Star of Love and Beauty, and therefore ruling your destiny."

"Ah me," replied the lady with a sigh. "Are all men flatterers? . . . But if it were even as you say," she continued in soft yet slightly mock-heroic tones, "methinks that radiant orb were far happier

than this poor child of Earth who, you say, owns its rule. For it has a Queen to worship, worthy of its adoration, and it hears no flattery, has no lovers, or else like the noble Artemis, heeds them not. But where can *I* find an object worthy of worship, either among the Lights of heaven or the *ignes fatui* of earth—Among my own frivolous sex? or, as you would doubtless hint, among the coarse and selfish stuff called Superior Man?"

"Dear Lady Disdain," said Dayrell with calm masterfulness, "must Worship then be limited to created forms or to the foolish children of the dust? . . . . And may we not sometimes miss the true worship, not because there is no fitting object of adoration, but from our own want of power and will to adore."

Lady Stella looked at her companion admiringly—then, for an instant, as if she would have liked to say, "Do not think I am going to worship you." But her eye fell before his, and she replied, "Whoever could not worship in such an hour as this, were poor and mean indeed." As they turned away towards the house Dayrell replied, "Yes, the old Greek worship of the Beautiful, while Time lasts, will hold its power over noble minds. A soul like yours, Lady Stella, cannot rest in itself, but amidst such scenes as those we have just been looking on, goes up to that which is Higher than itself in measureless adoration and love!" He scarcely knew why, but he found he had taken the lady's hand in the excitement of

the hour. In an instant it was withdrawn—yet not apparently in anger or surprise, while its owner said slowly, with suppressed enthusiasm, "Ah, I know that ever since I thought at all on such subjects, I have felt incomparably more true worship as I, and I think you, understand the word, when listening to exquisite music or standing by the sea-shore, in a thunder-storm, or on a mountain top, than I ever did in church—except when the presiding musical genii there accidentally allowed some glorious strains from Handel or Mozart."

"Certainly, it is music like theirs that best plumes the wings of worship," replied Dayrell, "but why, oh why can we not have grand organ music and the vision of a sunset sky combined?"

"Just for want of two little accessories—the Grecian climate, and the Grecian soul," replied the lady.

"For the climate, alas, we must live in Greece," said Dayrell—"and why not? But for the Grecian soul, may it not inspire us here and now?" Then he spoke about Grecian poets, and legends, Grecian heroes and philosophers—of Plato and Pericles, of Grecian worship and gods and goddesses, as he had never spoken before, and as the lady had never before heard any mortal discourse,—until, fairly carried out of herself by his burning enthusiasm, bright imaginings, and most musical voice, she seemed lost in his thoughts and living only in his life. The change from her habitual and often cynical coldness of manner was wonderfully fascinating. If a young

enthusiast's "glacial period" is sometimes transformed into a lava flood under such exceptional circumstances one need not be surprised—no, nor even if the glacial period should occasionally return.

"Arrested development," indeed, is a phenomenon, some cynics tell us, that not unfrequently occurs even in the most violent courtship. And although, during Dayrell's impassioned outbursts, Lady Stella had listened with fixed and delighted attention, yet in the momentary pause which followed, she actually found those provoking lines of Praed's humming in her head—

> "And Beauty marked the minstrel's cheek,
> * * * * *
> Vowed she could listen for a week."

and only saved herself from asking her companion if he did not think he really ought to change his tailor, by abruptly inquiring what it was he had been asking the Dean of Westminster in the conservatory, in the reply to which some of her witty friends seemed interested.

"Oh, it was nothing—nothing worth repeating," answered Dayrell.

"But if I choose to ask you," retorted the lady loftily.

"Oh yes, of course, your wishes are law," rejoined the gentleman. "It was only that the Dean with his usual good sense was censuring the extreme vagaries of some of the Ritualistic clergy, but saying that there was much more in it than you and others

seemed to think because there was so much symbolism."

"Oh yes, I heard all that funny stuff," interrupted the lady impatiently. "But what passed just after that?"

"Why, a demented young cleric who unluckily overheard him turned full upon him, with so much impertinent acrimony, that I couldn't help diverting the tide by asking him if he knew why the letter H was the most absurdly superstitious letter in the alphabet. Youthful cleric was obliged to stop and consider, but found no answer, and looked uncomfortable. So I modestly answered, 'Because it makes that hallowed which otherwise is but allowed.'"

"Good," said Stella. "I wish I had seen him extinguished."

"Oh, but he wasn't extinguished," replied Dayrell. "The Dean and most of us left him in the conservatory, declaiming on postures and millinery to a few benighted women."

"Ah," said Stella. "I wish I could have shown them my marmoset monkey. He preaches in a white surplice—beautifully, and always turns to the East at breakfast. But turning to something even more interesting, did you hear what that dear delightful Mr. Dean was saying as he left the conservatory, about the joy with which he seemed to think the Hebrew race used to celebrate their worship? and then he spoke beautifully, though rather gushingly, of the joy and comfort with which those musty old

psalms filled millions of hearts to this day. Did it not remind you a little of what old Mr. Dayrell used to declaim about so eloquently?"

"Aye, indeed!" answered her lover with immense delight and animation.

"But what did *you* think of it all?" pursued the lady with something between a sigh and a sneer.

"It made me think," answered the guileless devotee, "of all the intense happiness with which I have wandered among the glorious fables of Greece, and lived over again the sunny life of early Greeks and realized *their* faith and worship and joy. Oh, I can't tell you, Lady Stella," he continued with a deprecating smile, "how completely I have had faith, with them, in Naiad and Nymph, in Dryad and Faun—how very *real* have been to me the haunted glens of Mount Ida, where Œnone gazed and watched by her sleeping lover, or the flowery plain of Orthomenos where the sweet playful nymphs nursed and tended the infant Dionysus. . . ."

"Real!" she murmured musingly. "Yes, what else *is* real? Would that we had lived when Endymion slept by moonlight on Latmos—"

"Rather, let us once again bring down gods and goddesses to earth!" ejaculated Dayrell. "One of their kindred, at least, is already here to welcome them."

Her answer was only a reproachful smile. But presently she said:

"I think old Mr. Dayrell was very fond of these exquisite Greek myths and legends—"

"As all noble souls," answered the young man impulsively, "must be who desire to unfold and perfect their nature in the higher forms which history and imagination, alike, show are attainable. I tell you, fair lady, smile sceptically as you may, that the legend of those 'Isles of Joy,' far, far away in the east or west, where, too, is found the fountain of perpetual youth, have in them a kernel of immortal truth. Oh, believe me, it was not a false, deceiving dream. . . ."

"I did not know I smiled," said the lady, "or if I did," she added softly, "it was not in scorn, but I think in gladness. Perhaps my evil nature for the time was conquered." And the young dreamer went on encouraged:

"May there not be life, Lady Stella, which is perpetual youth? Are we not as much meant for it as the unfledged skylark for the blue sky?"

"Meant for it?" said the lady in a melancholy tone.

"Tending towards it, then, fitted, destined—anything you please to call it! Only let us believe in it as the goal to which we have to strive. Should we not, can we not, do much even now to reach it? to live again in that glorious, blessed springtime?"

"Go on," murmured Lady Stella, "I like to hear you talk all this imaginative nonsense. It does

me good." Then turning to him with that superb grace and winning sweetness which were among her chief characteristics, she added with a charming but hypocritical deference, "Have you never gazed with Gray, since you left Eton, on those 'distant spires and antique towers,' and whispered to the fair scenes of *your* youth,

'I feel the gales that from ye blow
A momentary bliss bestow,
As, waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to soothe
And redolent of joy and youth
To breathe a second spring?'"

"Aye," responded Dayrell eagerly, "If I could a momentary bliss on you bestow—"

"Wave, wave then fresh, thy gladsome wing,
So redolent of youth,

continued Lady Stella—

"Wave it again, yet once again,
Over my weary soul."

Who could look on that queenly face now changed from its usual hard satirical appearance, to a soft, indeed, almost tender and playful expression, and not feel swept away into at least a momentary transport of admiration and love? Certainly not young Dayrell.

But just as he thought the supreme moment of life and love was come, and he was on the point of seizing her hand, not this time to let it be withdrawn, the lady, provokingly, stepped quickly forward; yet, when a little ahead of him, and well out of danger, she looked back with a saucy smile,

saying, "You don't seem to be waving a very gladsome wing just now. If you can't think of anything original, such as a poet ought at once to improvise in reply to my quotation, under such circumstances do as I did, and *quote*."

"I will," exclaimed Dayrell, impetuously, though with effort. "But if I quote from Wordsworth's glorious ode, remember," he added, "it is not with a controversial view. I don't say for a moment—don't in the remotest way even hint—whatever I may believe—that there is the slightest chance of what I know too well you don't believe in—a life beyond the grave. All I ask you to hope for is what poets, prophets, philosophic seers, have beheld in glorious vision—a World of Beauty and Harmony, a Life of Love and Joy realized on this earth. And just because you cannot share in Wordsworth's hope of immortality, let us all the more believe that we, and all true believers, may renew our 'golden prime' and bring back the 'Juventus mundi,' the glorious youth of our race even here and now in this grand world. For

> "'. . . . in a season of fair weather
> Though inland far we be,
> Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
> Which brought us hither—
> Can in a moment travel thither,
> And see the children sport upon the shore,'
> And *with* them sport and bathe
> In that bright sea of Beauty, Love, eternal Youth."

Stella shook her head, but took up the strain, softly singing:

"Oh, joy that in thine embers,
The ashes of thy youth,
Is something that doth live—
That Dayrell yet remembers
What was so fugitive—"

"But which," responded Dayrell,

"We yet shall cause again to live
Till it shall be . . . . 'the fountain light of all our day.'

. . . . It seems to me as if the gods had given us once in the evolution of ages a vision of man's true ideal life, of perfect humanity and gladness—of exultant, joyous, *musical* existence, in those Grecian 'children' of our race, in that Hellenic land of loveliness, in those dreams of theirs, of beauty and freedom, of love and joy, wherein we see them 'sport upon the shore,' that mankind might have at least one pure well from which to refresh their weary souls, and one ideal to which they should evermore aspire. See that glorious sunset sky, opening out into far-off realms of heavenly joy and beauty. Does it not seem

"'As if to grace the gorgeous West,
The Spirit of departing Light—'

had given us a momentary glimpse into the brighter world 'beyond the sea,' where those 'Isles of Joy,' are indeed awaiting all beautiful and heroic souls, and of which we have so many exquisite visions given us now, to reveal to us our true and gladsome destiny. Ah, Lady Stella, may we not hope and strive to reach it! The ghost of Hamlet's father appeared to his unhappy son to goad him

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to revenge a foul unnatural wrong. The spirit of my honoured grandsire rises before me ever and anon, not only in 'pale glimpses of the moon,' but in glorious sunny dawn—as he was once on earth, is now perhaps for ever—full of buoyant youthful gladness, calling me to herald and proclaim the kingdom, and the holy loving worship of divine eternal Joy. . . . There!" added the speaker, as he faced his amused and, in spite of her amusement, sympathizing listener—for he dreaded lest she should think him too much in earnest. "Beat that, Lady Stella, if you can. But," he continued, gradually sinking his voice into a low, deep, pleading whisper, "but oh, believe in it all, *and* believe just a little, in me. Will you not?"

"It is infinitely refreshing," replied the lady slowly, "to know that any one with brains still believes in the worship of Joy, and to hear him speak of it as you do. . . . But . . . sometimes . . . . I think—nay very often—*pace* my paladin-prophet-priest of the Dionysiac cult—(that's you, Sir Wilfrid)—that there is no longer any joy left in this English world, or in this mortal life, to be worshipped at all. The world is growing senile; it seems to me, men find their chief delight in betting and gambling, in speculation and smoking, or intrigue. They understand nothing of real 'Play,' but make a business and exhausting toil of nearly all amusements, and recruit their jaded spirits with burlesques and ballet-dancing, lulling themselves with

tobacco, or exciting themselves with drink. The worship of Joy! nay, preach it not to me. Ah, Mr. Dayrell, how indescribably sad and dreary is all——" The fair speaker paused, then gazing for an instant on her lover with an expression that made his heart beat high with hope, she exclaimed. "Not Joy, not Peace, but—INTELLECT—Yes, I *can* worship that!"

There was profound stillness in the air—soft ensuing silence, broken only now and then by the last notes of a song-bird, or the distant lowing of one or two home-sick kine.

It cannot be denied that at this moment there was grave reason to apprehend that Lady Stella Faulconhurst and Wilfrid Dayrell were very near each other in heart and soul, nearer than they had ever been before. For both of them—as it would seem to the cynical world—were in reality alike injudiciously enthusiastic and dangerously romantic. But imaginative natures are given to romance, while romantic enthusiasm is not necessarily combined with a capacity for deep unselfish love; such natures moreover are liable to sharp reaction and sudden depression, as well as to an oppressive egotism.

* * * *

It was growing dusk, dark in fact under the trees, but they had unknowingly come very near the house, where on the lawn the rest of the guests were assembling preparatory to taking their departure, sipping claret-cup and negus. Sounds of music issued from the open windows of the drawing

room, and they stood a few moments silent, hidden by flowering shrubs. A rich contralto voice was heard singing that exquisite little Spanish song, "Juanita." The effect was magical, but not exactly the same on both the deluded young persons who were listening concealed. Dayrell was entranced with delight; not so the lady. He turned towards her with impassioned gesture, just as she caught sight of her aunt and cousin evidently in search of them, and heard them mention her name to a young couple on the lawn. The latter looked in the direction where she and her lover were standing. The dreadful thought occurred, Had they not caught sight of her already, accompanied by Dayrell; or if she waited another moment might they not witness something even more ridiculous? Clearly she was placed in an absurd and equivocal position, even if only by returning so late with the young gentleman from their ramble. Hence, as the last sweet notes of the song died away, she suddenly withdrew her hand from his arm, turned haughtily from him, and exclaiming with infinite contempt, "Sentimental nonsense!" abruptly left her companion, and advanced alone towards the party on the lawn. Dayrell felt much as if a jealous rival had stabbed him under the regulation rib, and recovered consciousness only to hear Lady Stella remarking, with perfect *sang-froid* and with the old cynical smile, to one of the ladies whom she met: "How much more sensible and agreeable to be out

here in the garden than in those hot stuffy rooms. But one may have too much of a good thing." Then putting herself under her aunt's wing, she remained immersed in general society, until her carriage was announced, and with chaperon and cousin she was borne swiftly home. But she had heard her lover, when she broke away from him, smite his hands together with a fierce imprecation on things in general, and most of all on woman in particular, and her sleep that night was restless—disturbed by evil dreams. She had not intended to be the cause of quite such a fierce volcanic explosion, and rather shrank from the consequences.

So they twain seemed hoplessly rent asunder by a few hasty words, and thenceforth went groping along their separate ways, in more or less bitterness of soul, often in darkness that might be felt—plunged back again, they knew not clearly how or why, into dreary depths of mocking doubt, with their gods vanished from the heavens like falling stars.

And though it was impossible that either of them could be altogether ignorant of what each was suffering, or mistake the significance of that icy coldness and forced indifference with which they met in society, or heard of each other's doings, no reconciliation seemed even conceivable either to themselves or their nearest friends.

> "For their hearts were swollen and turned aside,
> By deep interminable pride;
> This first false passion of their breast,
> Rolled like a torrent o'er the rest."

And like the Venetian renegade, they met all the pitiful pleading of their secret souls, or of nearest friends, for some concession, some admission of wrong committed, some riving asunder by the Angel of Humility of the dark cloud of wrath that overhung them with the answer,—

> "No—though that cloud were thunder's worst
> And charged to crush them—let it burst."

All this little secret quasi-comic tragedy was merely a piquant farce, or at the best a poor nine-days' wonder to such members of "Society" as were competent to observe and discuss it. It enlivened more than one box at the theatre, and filled up sundry pauses in the dance for a week or two; then some other *spectacle*—tragi-comedy, operetta, ballet, scandal, or farce—swept along and absorbed the general interest.

But it was not altogether safe (as one or two inconsiderate, flippant young persons of the lighter sort found to their cost) to attempt to rally either of the two principal actors and sufferers in this special dramatic performance on their supposed dejection.

Fred Ellerslie, indeed, though heartily regretting that his friend "had come such a cropper," and generally showing only respectful as well as kindly sympathy, could not refrain one night from mentioning to some light-minded friend in Dayrell's hearing a curious incident which had occurred only an hour previously.

"Coming up the Blackfriars Road," said he, "this

most gloomy and detestable evening, where I had been taking a 'constitutional,' and was studying the fauna and flora of that *terra incog.*, I noticed two old beldames crooning to each other a little in front of me. As I passed them I distinctly heard one of them say: 'And so you see he were crossed in love—that is, he were run over the werry day afore he were a-going to be married.'"

A general and hearty laugh ensued, in which, however, Dayrell didn't join. Some incredulity was expressed as to the genuineness of the story, and one of the listeners declared that he didn't think Ellerslie had been witty enough to invent such a capital joke.

"Neither am I," replied Fred. "I defy any fellow to have concocted that explanation. I assure you, seriously, I heard those very words not two hours ago. The old lady had evidently met with the expression being 'crossed in love,' had probably often been in danger herself of being run over at crossings, took it for granted in her beautiful innocence that any one about to be married must be in love—muddled all these ideas, and the tragic event, up into one grand though hazy Turneresque conception, and contributed her immortal saying to the wit and wisdom of our national street folk-lore. Fortunate that I was at hand to preserve and record it."

As Dayrell departed, he shook hands with his friend and said privately:

"I forgive you. No erring mortal could have re-

sisted the temptation to tell that story, and I acquit you of malicious intent or invention. I wouldn't have missed hearing it for something—only don't imagine I myself am in any special danger of dying in that way."

But friends were generally discreet and considerate, while the lovers' kind-hearted relatives on either side were careful to avoid (or repress in their presence) all reference to sunsets, poetry, music, and the worship of Joy generally, as well as to Greek myths and legends in particular. But there was very little outside show of dejection or disappointment anywhere. Close observers might remark that Dayrell was more than usually smart and snappish in his repartees, and even in his ordinary talk; but he wrote more brilliantly and to the purpose in prose, and more stingingly and wittily in verse, than ever. While the Lady Stella was wonderfully improved in her behaviour to everybody except her quondam suitor (whom she met disdainfully or turned from contemptuously), so that Society pronounced her to be much more sociable and less dangerous than formerly.

CHAPTER V.

Time, nevertheless, somehow or other, wore on—wearily, painfully, or pleasantly. Another season came round. Dayrell and Lady Stella in the meantime had seen very little of each other since that exciting conversation and its dismal ending at the Richmond garden party. The course of their inner life, with all its conflicting thoughts and emotions, its ridiculously morbid regrets and bitter resentments, or remorseful, tormenting self-reproaches, need not be further mentioned here. For these moods of heart and mind in glowing or gloomy youth are often as changeful as they are tumultuous, and as passionate as painful, useful, perhaps, to be known as warnings, but scarcely edifying to the public. It is enough, and perhaps more than enough, to know that in natures like those of the two young companions in that garden walk, there are often effects produced by such scenes which do not pass away, but leave indelible marks of bane or blessing. And in the hearts of both, there was not only the changing and conflicting tide of passion, but a deep aching sense in each (of which they were but half conscious) that they had then made great fools of themselves, had come very near the true perfection of their earthly life and happiness, and

been wrenched asunder by some cruel and destroying fate, or some shameful outbreak of temper and pride, resentment or folly, which had left them like a stranded vessel, still near to the broad river of a mutual and immortal love, but on which they could now never hope to

". . . . launch away,
And spread their white-winged sails to the light of an Eastern day."

Yet when the London season came round again the following year, and in spite of their professed indifference to the ordinary dissipations of the fashionable world, the lady and her irreconcilable lover were continually being drawn into the vortex, each was frequently condemned to hear of some remarkable sayings or doings attributed by admiring or satirical followers to the other. Lady Stella's beauty, accomplishments, and wit (all the more enjoyed for its pungency and sarcasm), her brilliant singing, and singularly graceful dancing when induced to give way (which was not seldom) to that frivolous and enchanting amusement, were the theme of a hundred tongues, especially of her many masculine admirers; so that Dayrell inevitably heard enough to keep him at chronic fever point, in spite of all the cold water *douches* he employed to extinguish the flame. While on her part, Mr. Dayrell's verses and reputation for classic learning, not of the prosy but the fascinating kind, his articles in leading periodicals, his conversation on the drama and politics of the day, above all, his enchanting

tableaux vivants, charades, and drawing-room theatricals, were so much the lionizing rage amongst "the upper Ten," that her pretty little frivolous cousin actually composed a short parable for a certain Sunday school magazine, respecting the danger in which a lovely humming-bird was once placed of being fascinated by the rattle of a deadly serpent, as a warning to young girls in regard to the race of fascinating human serpents generally.

There was, however, one great safeguard for the lovely humming-bird against any danger of a renewal of young Dayrell's attentions whereof she was not aware. If the fact that she would inherit a considerable property at her father's death, and probably receive a large dowry should she marry in his lifetime, ever occurred to herself, she thought of it simply as a pleasant means of enabling the man of her choice, whoever he might be, to enjoy many advantages and luxuries he might not otherwise possess, as well as give her considerable power over him. But when first Wilfrid Dayrell realized that fact, it came on him with a sharp pain, and seemed to make any, even the remotest, idea of renewing his suit absolutely impossible, supposing all other obstacles removed; for his father had decided not to make "an eldest son" of him, but had rightly left his widow in possession for her lifetime of his not very large estate, and divided it equally among his children afterwards.

Thus, then, the lovers went stumbling, blundering on, fancying themselves very fine, high-minded young

people, utterly unsuspicious of their blindness and poverty, egotism and folly, and perhaps equally unconscious of their true greatness in virtue of certain divine relationships which the angels thought they both possessed, but which they themselves strictly ignored.

Under circumstances like these, however, it is not surprising that, with Ellerslie's advice and guidance, Dayrell began reading tremendously hard for the bar—nor that in course of time he took it much more easily.

CHAPTER VI.

THE following summer it so happened that "Society" was greatly exercised about a remarkable picture in the Royal Academy and its author. It was evidently executed by an amateur, sadly wanting in technical execution and recognized conventional art, yet so striking in its effect and so full of genius alike in conception, composition and artistic power that it would have had little difficulty in obtaining admission to any Continental Gallery or Exhibition. But a large amount of influential pressure had to be exerted on the Royal Academicians' Hanging Committee before official as well as professional jealousy and disapproval were overcome. For besides its technical defects, it was by an unknown man who gave the name of Horace Grantley—a man who had never studied in the Academy, nor made friends of the Academicians. Admitted, however, it was at last, and actually hung on the line, for the Hanging Committee felt that it would "draw."

The subject of the picture was a lovely sunset sky, across whose delicate roseate flush two or three black, jagged clouds were rising, while in the bold darkening foreground a youth and maiden were

standing, their hands clasped, but their faces, on which the light still shone, averted from each other, as if in the act of parting. And on those faces was depicted an expression of subdued anguish, especially on that of the young man, almost terrible to behold.

The name of the picture in the catalogue was merely "In the gloaming," but underneath were the explanatory lines:

> "In the gloaming—broken-hearted—
> How or why they scarcely knew—
> Only knew, though now they parted,
> Once their love was deep and true."

The provoking part of the business was that the gifted young artist would not let himself be lionized, accepted no invitations, resisted all attempts to draw him from his seclusion, returned no calls. In fact, the good lady who took in Mr. Grantley's letters at the address given in the catalogue, said he came there only now and then since his painting had been finished and taken away. So no progress could be made either by "lion-hunters," genuine admirers and generous artists, or patrons of art. But the picture was sold for a considerable sum within a fortnight of its being exhibited.

There was generally a crowd round it in the earlier part of the day. But one evening, soon after the opening day, when the throng of visitors to the Exhibition had considerably lessened, a young lady stood gazing at it long and silently. As she

turned round she encountered Wilfrid Dayrell, and slightly started. Their eyes met, wandered to the picture, then back again, and for an instant they looked in each other's faces. As the lady bowed and turned away with a rising colour, she said softly:

"I did not know you had learned to paint in oils;" adding, "and were not ashamed to sail under false colours."

"Ladies often change their names from mere sentimental nonsense," replied the young man, "why may not men do the same?"

The Lady Stella did not look at any more pictures in the Academy that evening, nor did she seem inclined to visit it again for some time. Horace Grantley's picture continued to adorn the walls of Burlington House, and when the Academy closed he was speedily forgotten.

But a day or two after that rencontre a rather eminent statesman called at Sir Michael Ronhead's house in Portman Square. He had done so several times previously, had dined there, had manifested on such occasions something of the intellectual grasp and that power of expression which had won him a distinguished position in the political world. No wonder Lady Stella listened with rapt attention to his converse. His daughter (for he was a widower) had also called, and had been at Lady Stella's parties, and had tried, without any remarkable failure or success, to make herself agreeable

to the young heiress. The father, in fact, seemed more successful in that line than the daughter. He was still in the prime of life, having married when only twenty, and exerted with no slight skill his power of discoursing to the young lady on all political affairs, past, present, and future. In his company Stella's cynicisms and sarcasms alike disappeared. Her ambition and her imagination were evidently captivated; and, above all, her intellect was satisfied and gratified beyond her expectations. Yet, strange to say, she had a heart, which she always endeavoured to ignore —sometimes (perhaps often) in vain—and which was now far from content. Memories of other conversations, visions of a pale young face and fire-darting eyes, momentary yet passionate desires to feel once more " . . . the touch of a vanished hand," to hear "the sound of a voice . . . " that might never reach her ears again—these had kept that woman's heart of hers in stout rebellion against her dominant intellect and ambition. And then came the sight of that picture, and the lines beneath it, and the presence of the artist, and the sound of the musical voice that for her had long been " still."

But the eminent statesman knew only of the evident interest felt by the lady in his visits and conversation—nothing of the rebellion. How should he? He had inherited from his excellent parents but little of what are called the affections, and had certainly never cultivated what little he possessed.

Hence he had called more than once in Portman Square, had held long and interesting conversations with the charming, witty, handsome, highly-educated, clever daughter of his old friend, the M.F.H., and thought himself deeply in love. At length he sought an interview with that friend at their club, and as a result of the interview, proceeded with stately step and self-complacent pride to the house in Portman Square as above mentioned. He was only a few days too late—had a rather agitating interview with the lady, and, to his great surprise and disgust, found that it was undesirable he should call on her again.

"I thought you *would* have accepted that great man," said Frances; "he argued with you so beautifully."

"Yes," replied Stella. "In courtship he condescended to argue, but in wedded bliss he would have been omniscient, and woe to the wife that may occasionally differ from him."

The M.F.H. was much disappointed and very cross for at least three days. But as the hunting season, beginning with the mystery of "cub-hunting," was now within a measurable distance of say two months, and he was on the point of quitting "this wretched stupid London" for his beloved country seat with all its rural delights, he soon recovered his temper and good spirits. His daughter, however, remained in semi-disgrace until she explained her disinclination to being bored about matrimonial projects in

so peremptory a manner that the old gentleman was fain to patch up a peace at rather short notice.

The young gentleman whom it most concerned had heard of the projected alliance between the statesman and the heiress, from Ellerslie without wonder, but not without serious and nearly fatal questionings as to the soundness of Plato's reasoning and the wisdom of following Cato's example when in great tribulation. At length he gave up the use of razors, locked them away with his revolver, got on to a Derbyshire moor on the twelfth of August, and blazed away over the farms of Aldclyffe Priory among the stubble, woods, and turnips through September and October, till he could settle himself well in the saddle behind Sir Michael's pets.

One bright December morning that season a lithe and practised young rider cantered along to the "meet" on a gallant chestnut mare over the springy turf with a fresh breeze in his teeth and a sense of recovered joy long absent from his mind. Then came the burst from cover amid universal gaiety, and the mad rush after the full-voiced pack, and then the wild excitement with which fence after fence was taken, and then the determined charge at the great ox-fence, from which many a gallant horse and rider recoiled, but at which young Dayrell flew with frantic gladness as he cheered his steed to fly over it with a bound which—had the ground on the other side been firm——

* * * * *

On the other side of that fence, the next moment, after a few struggles, rider and horse lay still. One never moved again.

CHAPTER VII.

"THIS is a sad business."

"What?"

"Oh, haven't you heard? But you won't hear now, if you care to attend only to that wretched little monkey——"

"The monkey, his tricks, his quasi-human intelligence, his position in creation—I mean, in Evolution — his probable close relationship to ourselves, all afford me profound instruction and amusement. May not the weary tedium of human existence be relieved by monkeys? Else why should they exist?"

"Thoughtless girl! You forget your theology. Have you not just indicated the *raison d'être?* Without them, could *we* have been? But it's hardly a time for fooling, when a bright, young, noble life, in which we have all rejoiced, is suddenly struck down." The speaker's voice became a little husky. "Haven't you heard? Young Mr. Wilfrid Dayrell, of the Priory—— Ah, you are interested at last, are you? But any misfortune to a near neighbour ought——"

"Yes, yes, I know; don't preach. What is it, Frances?"

"Out hunting; horse fell on him over an awkward fence, legs crushed, face gashed—disfigured and crippled for life. For two or three days they feared his reason was gone—for ever."

"And he was not killed. Ah, well! So much the worse for him."

The monkey received an extra amount of playful attention, for a few minutes, from its young mistress, and then with a slight well-acted yawn the lady left the room, merely saying, "Yes, that is indeed a sad affair."

"Ah," said her companion to herself, "I thought so. Sad for more than one. I suppose it's true, as mamma once said, that it takes a great deal to kill a girl's regard for a Dayrell. Yet what is any one's trouble in this matter compared with that of this poor Dayrell's mother and sisters?"

The speakers in that conversation were the two cousins mentioned above, the mistress of the monkey being also, as before mentioned, *de facto* mistress of the noble mansion, in a drawing-room of which, looking out on a finely timbered park, the above conversation took place.

The community of sympathy and interest which had existed between Sir Michael and his daughter during the hunting season while she was in her teens, sadly diminished after that period, for if truth must be told, she had at length, though still extremely fond of riding, begun to regard that national country-gentlemen's sport, fox-hunting, in

so supremely ridiculous a light that now she never would join the hunt. Moreover, she had angered her father tremendously by sarcastic remarks thereon, more than once, and the whole subject thenceforth was tabooed. In the summer months, however, they had a great deal of pleasant riding together, though Frances, who was constitutionally rather timid, did not often accompany them, for they were given to sudden dashing escapades. That young lady's mother, Mrs. Grey, was just now away in a distant county at the bedside of a suffering married daughter.

Sir Michael came home from the fatal hunting-field late in the afternoon, having waited at the Priory till the provincial practitioner could give him a report of young Dayrell's condition, and seen a telegram dispatched to fetch an eminent surgeon from London. Stella and her cousin thought they had never seen him look so miserable.

In the course of a day or two, however, he brought them word that the patient's life would probably be spared, but that he would lose the use of his lower limbs.

Soon after this announcement, when the young ladies were alone in the evening, Lady Stella broke a long musing silence by saying abruptly, "What can we do to cheer up his poor mother and sisters? We *must* try to do something. They are such near neighbours." Her cousin agreed, and they discussed plans accordingly. But nothing seemed at once

feasible and *convenable*. The professed object, of course, was to bring some brightness to the homes and hearts of the ladies as they watched and tended the pallid and dejected sufferer, who lay all day on a luxurious sofa by the fire-side. But that sufferer himself may, possibly, have often been in the foreground of their thoughts.

"I have it!" at last exclaimed the heiress. "The best way to brighten up the women, of course, is to cheer up the young man. Now don't you remember what a mad passionate sort of interest he always seemed to take in everything relating to his old grandfather Dayrell, and especially in his grandsire's recollection of Greece and the War of Independence, and Lord Byron's heroic efforts and martyr death?"

"Certainly I do," answered her cousin with a flushing cheek. "And I suppose that is what has made this young man such an enthusiastic admirer of Byron's poetry."

"Aye, that—and a good deal more," replied Stella musingly.

"But," rejoined her cousin, "what makes him such 'a fond idolater' of the hero of that funny patchwork memoir of the Modern Bacchanal? I never could feel the least enthusiasm myself for the mad-cap votary of Dionysus."

"Could you not?—now—really?" said Lady Stella, looking down at her cousin with a curious mixture of affection and contempt. "What a mis-

fortune for—Mr. Charles Dayrell. Well, I confess I did. . . . But then, Frances, you are too young to be 'all evil.' We are not very much alike, are we, dear? And yet—and yet—I love you," she added, as she threw her arms round her cousin's neck.

"Well, but you darling old ogre," said Frances as soon as she was released, "What did this young man know of his grandfather? Could he ever have seen him?"

"In that 'patchwork memoir,' as you disrespectfully call it, but which seems so only to paper-knife reviewers and the superficial eye (for one great thought runs through the whole, finding its expression in varied forms), perhaps you don't remember how, very near the end, it is said that a friend who knew Charles Dayrell well, and wished——"

"Yes, yes," said Frances, "I remember."

"Well," continued Stella, "that young gentleman lying there on the sofa at Aldclyffe Priory was the Eton lad there mentioned, doted on by his grandsire, and giving him in return a sort of romantic love and worship before which even Greek and Guebre idolatry grows pale."

"I see," meekly replied the cousin. "And I think I *have* heard all about it once or twice before. But I really don't see why we are therefore to give ourselves up to a study of old Mr. Dayrell because he was young Mr. Dayrell's hero, or of this profligate Lord Byron. I don't, indeed," she repeated, "in spite of that withering frown of yours, or even that

disdainful smile. The world in general is not bitten now with the Byron mania—so much the better."

"Fie on thee!" exclaimed Stella, "cold and undiscerning sceptic! The world, the shallow fawning literary world has been bowing down in slavish admiration many a day, before meaner idols, who were not worthy to dust the pedestal on which Byron stands enthroned for ever. But that's not the question."

"Granted, granted. Smooth your ruffled plumes, my dear. If you only want me to see that the best thing we can do, if the doctor approves, and his mother rises to the hint, is to arrange for a few conversations, readings, &c., round the patient's sofa, I agree at once, even to the extent of criticising and renouncing Byron and all his works—and I promise you I'll second your benevolent schemes."

"Benevolent! Fudge; have you *ever* known me benevolent?"

"Not violently. Rather the other thing, in general, I confess. But then why make such a pother about this maimed young madman and his rather prosy relations?"

"Because at this season of the year, with Parliament just opened and all the men gone up to town, the country may be wholesome—but—it is distinctly dull; while, on the other hand, the unlucky lunatic is—a poet."

"Ah, I know too well you are poetical, if not

benevolent—romantic if not amiable. You never creep out in the dark dull November evenings to call on some poor goody—never feel a gentle interest in gifted young suffering poets and painters ——"

"Do shut up your foolish twaddle, Frances. I'll never confide to you again if you so pervert. . . Why, what can you be dreaming of? I tell you you are utterly mistaken. I have not—never had—a particle of what is *called* 'love' for that poor young man—even in"—and her voice trembled slightly—"even in 'his better days,' as shop-keepers phrase it. But now, of course, you dear silly dreamer, you can hardly suppose the tender passion is *very* likely to be evolved. Can't a girl feel a genuine interest in, a real attachment to, one of the stupid sex without being 'in *love?*'" (the last words uttered in a tone of sublimest scorn.) "But you read trashy sensational or sentimental novels till your thoughts run on nothing but all that foolery. Now, are you convinced of sin—and—squashed?"

"I don't feel a bit like it. Pity's a-kin to love."

"Well, *you* pity him, my fair coz—therefore, &c. *Allons, donc!* Take your candle and go to bed."

The thrust, though intended for a parry, had the desired effect. For though cousin Frances hadn't the slightest tender feeling except pity, and perhaps never had, for poor Wilfrid Dayrell, she was nervously sensitive, like many other young ladies, at being chaffed about any particular young gentleman.

The doctor, on being consulted respecting visits from

the Manor, was in favour of a little mental excitement, "if not too long continued. It would promote the action of the liver, and assist vitality in the lower limbs." The patient's mother and sisters were charmed with the idea. So meetings for reading and conversation were arranged. The heiress of Hurstleigh Manor and her cousin planned the programme for each *réunion*, and manifested the wisdom of the serpent beneath the silky sweetness of the dove. They commenced with judicious selections from "Elegant Extracts," passing over the real gems in that delightful but rather "mixed" repertory, and administering lengthy supplies of "superior" dulness, until the whole party were unmistakably bored, and the doctor declared that these afternoon *séances* were positively retarding his patient's recovery. Thereupon Lady Stella confidentially suggested that it would probably answer better if they could get young Mr. Dayrell to talk a little himself. "Ah, my dear," replied Mrs. Dayrell with a sigh, "that would be very well if we only knew what he would care to talk about. But he has lost all his old interest in every subject under the sun."

"Even in himself?" Stella asked—but not aloud. To his mother she blandly answered—"Yes, but not in what once was under the sun, and lived in its light, diffused its light—and now," she added to herself, "lives, some people think, in far brighter light. . . I mean," she continued aloud, "the fine old man—the bold, plucky, gallant, handsome old gentle-

man, beloved at Eton and Oxford, in Greece and Whitechapel! Ah, Mrs. Dayrell, we never now meet with young men equal to the old ones, do we? But we can, perhaps, hear a little about this particular patriarch. Lead your suffering son to talk of his grandfather, and see if his eye doesn't brighten, and his health improve —in spite of his medicine."

"Yes, yes, my dear," replied Mrs. Dayrell, "you have made a valuable suggestion."

"Hit the gold, my dear," added the frivolous young cousin softly—"just like the Son of Venus."

Young Dayrell's sunken eyes did brighten considerably at the proposal, but still more when he heard who had made it. Yet he felt and said he didn't think he could "do much in the talking-line."

"Then write what you have to say and read it to us," responded Stella, breaking her usually cold and slightly cynical serenity, with unwonted vivacity of expression, and making the sufferer on his couch turn his eyes with momentary brightness on the speaker.

Presently, raising himself on his elbow, he broke the silence by saying, with some emotion:

"Thank you all, very much. I will write what I remember. It won't be much—and perhaps not interest you—but it will pass the time."

As he lay back with a half-suppressed groan, Stella gently replied:

"Nay, it *will* interest us if it helps us to understand how Mr. Dayrell threw off the weary weight of life. You see, Mr. Wilfrid," and she

bent a little towards him, "there is much that delights us in those memoirs of his career, but much also we cannot quite understand. Try and enlighten us. I, for one, cannot at all believe in the worship of Joy."

"Nor in the worship of anything else," said Frances in a stage-whisper.

"Yes," answered Stella, also in a low tone, "has not the great German impostor of whom Carlyle learnt so much wisdom, taught us to believe in 'the Worship of Sorrow?'"

"My grandfather," said Dayrell, with painful effort, "certainly believed that worship was taught, as Goethe truly said, in Palestine and Gethsemane —and I know he also believed it was a needful preliminary to the Bacchantic dance."

"Well," replied Stella, "it may be so. At all events, I should like to be converted, and become able to believe in anything in which that Oriel graduate had profound faith sixty years ago. I fear that the world, and we who are of the world, have need of some faith or other. But nobody seems to have much."

Leaning back on his pillows, Wilfrid Dayrell wrote with a stylograph, day after day; wrote rapidly and persistently, till his mother had to interfere. But the doctor declared they had found something to do his young friend an evident amount of good. The crippled body was being revivified, as he wrote, by the sufferer's delight

in thinking that Stella would listen to it with some amount of interest. But his first feelings were not at all delightful. The poor maimed cripple had to work off a whole Mount Ossa-on-Pelion of morbid, self-conscious wretchedness. He seems from that surviving MS. quoted above to have thought he could do this best by starting a diary, which begins, accordingly, in the following characteristic fashion:—

"Journal by a 'Spoiled Child,' and a Ruined Spendthrift."

Well, I am writing as she bade me—but not for her or any one else to see. I remember she said, among other strange things, she wanted—they wanted—to understand how my grandfather learnt to throw off all this weary, weary weight of life and ill that presses on us all so heavily. But I can't help them. . . . She referred to the letter written to "Dayrell's eldest grandson, a remarkably fine Eton lad," &c. Ha, ha! There are the words. Read them, oh, ye owls! till you, like me, are sick of the sight. Was I a fine lad then? How the grinning fiends, who dog and torture us, must enjoy that notion now! Perhaps I had some "go" in me then; and, like my grandsire, could now and then show a few of them the way on the river, or when the merry curs were giving tongue with a breast-high scent; and in later days I believe I rowed stroke in my

college boat, and was near pulling in the University eight, and have ridden a dozen steeplechases, and danced through the night, and been —in—love—ha, ha! And now here I lie, maimed for all my days. . . . Ah, my God, help me! if there be a God. . . . Too late, too late. . . . There may be a God for others—not for me. . . . Why is all this miserable farce, this wretched, tantalizing pretence kept up any longer, by which we are first induced to believe in a loving God, and then in a cruel demon—giving with one hand and filching or rending away with the other? . . .

There was once a man named Charles Dayrell, who rode and ran, leaped, laughed, dined, fought, and danced, worshipped and rejoiced in worship, loved and wooed, and was beloved again, for fifty or sixty years in this glorious world—as he called it—and his grandson longed, and craved, and strove to go and do likewise. And that lively youth now lies at the gate of the temple "called Beautiful," crippled for life, and never a Peter or John able or willing to take him by the hand and say, "Rise up and walk."

* * * * *

The "Modern Bacchanal" (as the friend who wrote Mr. Dayrell's memoirs somewhat indiscreetly, though most appropriately, called him in his title-page) thought he understood the character and career of that marvellous Spanish knight, monk,

and organizer, Ignatius Loyola, by sympathy—by reflecting on what he himself might have become had *he* been struck down like the Founder of the Jesuits in early manhood. Aye, he might have been as great a Christian organizer as Loyola, had he, too, been crippled in his twenties; would have been in that case, I think. But Loyola lived in the Ages of Faith, and my grandsire breathed the air of the Revival of Belief, and was filled full with what is called the "Christian life." But the world in which I, too, once lived, dreamed, worshipped, is now, for me, shattered for ever, and with it has vanished every shred of faith, hope, love. What now to me are the glorious Grecian myths, their gods and worship? Hunting, rowing, dancing, society in manifold forms, chances of a political career—all gone; chance, even, of literary and poetic achievement, for with the outward life has gone the inward inspiration—even if I drag on existence—and with them whatever little chance there was of one day winning *her* love—gone, gone, utterly gone—and for ever! A score of manly young jackanapes—stay! No fool, coxcomb, profligate, will have any chance there—but—*but* there are men worthy even of her, who will woo her, and one of them not in vain, while I lie here, till I'm carried out in a box!

"And the merry sound of her marriage bell
Will serve for the crippled dreamer's funeral knell.

. . . I rather wonder now I let them keep me alive to write this. Well, they say there's no fool like an old one. If so, it is only because folly is so natural to youth that nothing is then thought of it —else I think I should never have let the surgeon's knife alone that night till it had gone across my wind-pipe as well as into my bones. . . . How remarkably consistent all this rhodomontade is with the character and spirit of him whom I have had for an example, as an infinite privilege—whom I have loved, honoured, since I could first toddle—and with a deeper reverence and affection than I care to prate about now. . . . Yet—yet—Merciful Heaven! *he* was never struck down in mid career, in the midst of health and strength and rejoicing life and power. . . . Is that true? Not *suddenly* struck down, I grant—but what was that letter written to me, at Eton, to explain? Something I could not understand then—nor, it seems, now. He was not pulled up at the age of five-and-twenty nor at sixty-four. He was going the pace long after three-score years. But a little later on, what then? Yes, he lived to see one activity after another taken from him—growing weaker and weaker, till he sat like a helpless log in his arm-chair—lived to feel all his sense of enjoyment deadened, and at length destroyed—to find all whom he loved most dearly leaving him —alone—those of his own generation all gone before to the Dark Land . . . and this went on for four or five years. Was not that, then, a harder trial

than mine? Heaven knows—not I. But I do know he was cheerful, kindly, patient, sweet-tempered to the last. . . . Why? She has asked me "why?" and I am writing about myself instead of him.

February 27th.—She asked me to-day how I got on with my "Recollections," and when I said that egotism was painfully predominant and "blotted out like a thick cloud" thoughts concerning one far worthier to be written about than myself, she assured me earnestly, may I not say tenderly? that my life was so interwoven, she thought, with his, that I must not shrink from speaking of myself. Kind Angels! I'll take her at her word. But it is hard, bitter hard to be pitied . . . when I—wanted—to be loved. . . . Well, well, to be weak is miserable! We have it on the authority of an arch-fiend, according to his biographer. Oh, ye gods and fiends! we know it in the bitterness of our own souls without your telling. Weakness! *growing* weakness—feeling one power after another going from you—feeling yourself more and more defenceless against visible and invisible evils—against all the ills around and within you—more helplessly dependent on others—boring them at every turn till they must long to see you under the sod, and you know yourself to be despised as well as hated! This is what an old man has to face—the possibility, probability, daily, hourly *danger*, of this, if not its actual reality. . . . . And I, at twenty-five, have to face it now! . . .

But *he*, my hero, was weak and *not* miserable—not harassed by fears, nor tortured by the dislike, hatred, or contempt of those around him. Noble-hearted, honoured, peaceful to the last—Charles Dayrell—tell me how this was! You loved me well, I know, in your life-time, and would have done anything, then, to make me a happier and better fellow. I know, well, too, you would come back to me from the 'echo-less shore,' if they would let you, to show me now the way to strength and peace. But—too late—too late. Oh why, if I must be crushed into this helpless mass of clay, why was it not while you were still living to teach me how to bear it? or why have I lived to face this lot alone?

Let me look again at his friend's letter to me. That friend knew him altogether—and he says—

'Men's motives no doubt are usually mixed—and their moods change with the changing tides. And large natures often overflow. But in strong natures you will always find some predominating idea and desire, good or evil. When your grandfather was young, he craved passionately to get—when a little older to give—all of freedom, beauty, and joy that could be gained or given. Grasping, eager, loving, filled with marvellous life and energy, he then seemed to know neither rest nor peace. But now that he is old and infirm, he rests calmly, lovingly in Him who is "the Fountain alike of Energy and Peace." When your faculties of body and mind, now so full of life, decay, may you, like him, enter into your Rest.'*

A friendly wish—and charmingly fulfilled. "Faculties of body and mind" have decayed—and pretty quickly too. What has become of that "Rest" he wishes I may enter into? Ah, but then *I* have not lived a useful and noble life of ceaseless toil for the welfare

* "Charles Dayrell, a Modern Bacchanal," p. 457.

of others, like the old hero of Oriel and the back slums. *I* have done nothing to earn that Rest. Herein lies the leaden weight of this curse of pain, weakness, and decay that has fallen on me.

But I think there's something more said about *his* rest and serenity in that memoir. Let me look at it again. The writer declares that though Charles Dayrell in his old age, "regarded himself as utterly useless in the world, and had a hard fight sometimes to avoid repining at his forced inaction," his friends truthfully affirmed "that he made their lives all the better and happier for continuing to abide among them." Some of those friends who had known him in the full rush of his youth and manhood, could not comprehend his "quietness" and peace now. Those who knew that "strength" may be "made perfect in weakness," understood the matter; and whether they did or not, it is certain, I know, that he was peaceful, cheerful, a blessing to all around him. And, look here, they don't say this was because he had lived a useful life. I know he himself never felt he had been of much use in the world. It seemed to him, I always thought, as if his plans and labours, after all, had been little better than a series of failures. True, he had worked very hard at everything he took in hand. But so have I; both at school and college, and since; and though the time was short it was all I had to work in. There must have been some other and deeper cause, and I

suppose the words I have quoted point to the quarter whence he gained his strength and peace. But I never could enter much into his feelings on what is called religion. He didn't talk to me often on the matter. He always dreaded the most distant approach to cant or priggishness, and I think he saw I was not altogether in sympathy with him about religious subjects. He knew my father and mother had drifted a long way from his own religious faith; so he scarcely ever opened out to me in that line. Perhaps it's a pity he didn't —maybe he's sorry now he didn't say more about his own views. . . . But then he knew they had read much more of so-called "Rationalistic" theology, both German and English, than of orthodox views, and agreed with it, too, a great deal more than with the conclusions to which he himself had been brought. Hence, I am sure he thought it would be wrong to influence me, and was afraid of interfering with their influence, rightly, no doubt, while I was a mere boy; yet he might have spoken to me more than he did when I had grown up and had gone to college. But I didn't give him much chance. And now—and now—*I* am sorry too. . . . "Strength made perfect in weakness"—a wonderful, very wonderful saying! I ought to become uncommonly strong at that rate, for heaven knows I am weak enough—and oh, very, very weary! Day after day, week after week, lying here—helpless, foolish. And *he*, under the

same privations, rested calmly, lovingly in Him "who is the Fountain at once of Energy and Peace."*

Yes, to him, possibly—but to me the fountain of weakness, misery, restlessness, despair . . . He had done his work, and might rest contented. But I had not even begun mine, when I was struck into this frightful grey-beard dotage! How can I "rest" in the author of it?

Is it then, chiefly because I shall be unable to do a stroke or two of good work in the world, that I am now whining and groaning over my mishap? Or, is it not rather because I shall never enjoy the world and its thousand pleasures? What if I *am* miserable because there is no happiness left for me on earth. . . . ?

Hark to Carlyle—"Foolish Soul. . . . Art thou then nothing other than a Vulture, seeking after somewhat to *eat*; and shrieking dolefully because carrion enough is not given thee? Close thy *Byron*; open thy *Goethe*."

Pooh, pooh, thou Nineteenth century prophet. Thou didst not half understand thy Byron, and I don't quite believe in thy Goethe. Thou sayest truly, "there is in men a HIGHER than Love of Happiness" —but falsely that "Man can do without Happiness," whatever he may find instead. That other hero-prophet, he of "the golden prime," and he also, "the modern Bacchanal" of a later day who worshipped

* Channing. "Essay on Fénélon."

that Joy-bringing Son of Semele, are we to desecrate and fling down that altar and renounce for ever the worship of Gladness? "Because thou art virtuous, &c., &c.?" Yet I remember once when that disciple of Dionysus was looking back on his past life—(how it all comes back on me!)—we were standing together on the Malvern Hills, to the top of which he had come up in a pony-chaise, looking over to the far west where the sun had set in soft serene beauty—as I once saw it in Richmond Park —I remember how sadly he said half to himself, "Aye, I loved the world well—too well."—"Is that, Sir," said I presently, but in a low voice, for I feared a little asking him—"what is meant by being worldly-minded?" He didn't answer at first, and then he said with a great sigh, "Yes—because I didn't love with my whole heart Him who made the world and all its beauty and joys, all that made me rejoice in them and should have made me rejoice in Him. All other worship would have been right if only that worship had been first and deepest." I remember I became so much interested in what he said then and afterwards, that after each conversation I wrote down all I could recollect; and I see that I next asked him how he knew that he deserved such heavy condemnation. He answered with a kind of pensive dreamy smile, still looking to the sunset, "Because the first thing I thought of in the morning, always, was what enjoyment I should get that day. . . . It was very long before

my early or later thoughts were how I could best serve or please God. . . . And let me tell you, my boy," he continued, putting his hand kindly on my head, "one's first thoughts on waking and rising are a mighty good test of your habitual character and tendencies. For then, you see, your will has scarcely come into play, and you are more under the influence of habit. . . . So look well to your waking morning thoughts, my lad. . . . My *habit* of mind, I have seen clearly enough, was then not to think of God, or to find any happiness in Him. I revered Him, tried to obey Him—but my happiness, the great desires of my life—ah, they were far away. . . . Yet sometimes I saw all this and knew it was wrong. And that was one reason, my lad, why I longed so deeply to see God under brighter, more beautiful and tender aspects than the usual theology supplies. For I know I did sometimes want, very greatly, to love Him better, and (as the old Book says, you know), 'to have Him in all my thoughts.' . . . Yet I didn't do it . . . . until, until I was laid aside. . . ." And then he drew a heavy sigh. Did he not judge himself too hardly? . . .

March 1st.—Oh, how those words come back to me now as clearly as if I heard them yesterday! . . . Just so it has been with me. Is that, then, why I am lying here, helpless, miserable? Would God, then, have me come to Him *now*, in my youth instead of letting me neglect Him till I'm old?

One day after that last conversation, I remember sitting in his study and asking him if it was not a trying time when he began to realize his growing weakness, and to know he was getting less and less able to work and enjoy life and go about as he used to do.

"Trying! Yes. At first I resented that increasing weakness as a cruel wrong. I remember once explaining in a way that I believe surprised as well as distressed a dear friend beside me (for you see, Wilfrid, I had played the hypocrite well, and pretended to be so peaceful and resigned)—'What a life this is! Eating, drinking, sleeping—nothing else—Shame on it!' Then my friend said, 'Nay, you still enjoy reading and being read to.' I can't tell you, my lad, how ashamed I felt of myself when I thought all this over in the silent night-watches. For then I saw how wonderfully and beautifully God was arranging my life, and I seemed to hear Him saying to me, 'It is in this state of bodily helplessness, My child, that your soul's life is being best developed.' Then I saw that I was being brought far nearer to God in that state than I ever was or could be when in the full flow of mere physical life and mental energy."

"Is it not, Sir," said I, "something the same at the end of life, then, as at the beginning? We don't think a baby is wasting time or living a useless life when only eating, drinking and sleeping, because it is preparing by those means for a

far nobler life. I'm sure you are preparing now for a glorious existence. . . ." My grandfather turned to me with one of those looks I can never forget, saying, "Right, dear boy, right. . . Ah, Wilfrid, don't forget all this when your turn comes. Watch against that terrible temptation to rebel against God's will and ways. For it often *is* a desperate temptation! But there's no peace, no love, no rightness of any kind till we've conquered it." And I'm very thankful now, more than I can just say, that I once asked him how it was to be conquered. For he answered, "Only by continued and persevering prayer for God's holy spirit, followed up by strenuous, determined efforts of will . . only by absolute unreserved self-surrender to God, perfect acquiescence in His appointments, such as the old Puritans in virtue of their Calvinistic training manifested." "But," I asked, "how can one learn to do this and gain strength and *will* to do it?" I cannot describe the pathetic solemnity with which he answered, "In the Easter moonlit night, in the Garden of Gethsemane, and by his help who conquered then!"

Not that day but soon after, when he was out in a wheel-chair, I ventured to refer again to what he had said about living such a useless life—merely eating, drinking, sleeping, and, I added, "You hardly realize, I think, how much you are doing for all who love you merely by living and receiving their love. Think, dear Sir, what a gap you would

leave in our lives if we could no longer come and wish you good morning, and say 'How d'ye do, Grandpapa?' or read to you, or help you to do anything you want. Is it not being very useful when you make us all love you as we do, and make us happy merely to see you?"

"Dear lad," he answered, "it's fine to hear you chatter in that way—and I hope it's all true—for it makes living more endurable—and happy."

I thought as he seemed inclined to converse, I would take the opportunity (for I always thought each time I talked with him might be the last) of bringing up again that point of surrendering our wills to the will of God; and with, I fear, something of a boy's petulance and perversity, hinted that there seemed to be something unmanly and mean in such unqualified sacrifice of one's own will to the will of another, however great and good He might be. "There are three motives," he answered, "which may rightly impel us to do so, without loss of manliness. First, when we submit to *force majeure* because there is no reasonable chance of effectual resistance, and when to attempt it would only involve others as well as ourselves in ruin. To submit to an unrighteous power, which it is not our duty to obey, and which exercises rule over us for its own selfish ends and to our harm, is not manly, is base when we may, can, and should resist!" And I saw the old man's eyes gleam and flash, as, I imagine, memories of Greek, Italian, Hungarian patriots,

crowded on his mind. But as he did not at first continue, I said under my breath, "And the other two motives?" Then he continued slowly and with gravity, "The second is when we yield our wills to a wiser, better, nobler will than our own because we feel or know it to be so. We may do this merely because we think it will be best for our own interests, Wilfrid, or because we know it to be our duty. But the highest, noblest motive is that without which the act of self-surrender, of yielding up our will to another being is not perfect, not wholly blessed—I mean the impulse of Love."

"But even that motive," I ventured to say, "would not be complete, would it? unless we yielded because we felt it a duty as well as because we loved Him to whom we yielded?"

"Right, my lad, right again!" he answered with more than usual earnestness. "Love needs the conscience to make it perfect. Who taught you that?"

"You, Sir," I replied, as he again patted my head affectionately. "You praise me for hitting with a shaft feathered from your own wing."

"Then I won't praise you," he answered gently, as he leant back in his wheel-chair, looked at me for a moment with those wonderful big eyes of his, then closed them and added, "I won't praise you, my boy—only love you."

How was it—oh heavens!—how did it come about that with such a teacher I couldn't learn the

lessons which would have saved me from despair—from madness in the hour of wreck and ruin?

* * * *

One other scene I find described in those notes.

I couldn't get this idea of "Worldliness," as something vile and bad, into its right place. I had seen my father and mother smile at the clergyman for condemning it. Yet I knew my grandfather denounced it. So I said to him one day when I was asking about his youth, "But, Sir, surely you were not wrong to love and enjoy the world so intensely as you did. You were, must have been, wholly right in that." It was some time before he answered. I had sent the old man's memory wandering over the scenes of his sunny youth. At first I thought he was dozing, but I soon perceived he was more vividly awake than usual.

"Aye, aye!" he exclaimed at last with a deep sigh—more of thankfulness, I think, than sorrow. "Yes, by Bacchus and Artemis and all the gods of the early Dawn! The world was meant to be loved and rejoiced in, and honoured, and in the antique sense, *worshipped!*—in youth—in the 'Juventus Mundi,' and in the youth of every human being, and of all creatures on the earth . . . But are we to be always children? That old Greek view of life and Nature—oh, how beautiful! Lovely as the grace of dancing youth and maiden—as the Auroral dawn of a summer's holiday—as the gambols and gaiety, as the 'Play-impulse,' of every

innocent happy young creature on God's earth. But not—meant—to last. Beautiful, *and* transitory."

Then he took up a volume of the *Contemporary Review* and presently continued:

"A splendid critic, writing here on 'Goethe,' and in reference to the charge often brought against him of being simply a 'Great Heathen,' says, 'He provoked [that charge] and almost claimed it in his sketch of Winckelmann, where after enthusiastic praise of the ancients, and of Winckelmann as an interpreter of the ancient world, he inserted a chapter entitled, 'Heidnisches,' which begins thus: 'This picture of the antique spirit, absorbed in this world and its good things, leads us directly to the reflexion that such excellences are compatible only with a heathenish way of thinking.' . . . Ah, we are all of us little heathens when young, and not about to die. But, my boy, what say you? Would you be a heathen and a child all your life! Do you wish you had never got beyond a go-cart and a rattle? Pooh! When Goethe felt like that—sage, philosopher, poet, sweet singer and many-sided mighty mind, as he was—he saw but half of man's nature, powers, destiny. Stunted, crippled soul was his, in this world, after all. He knows more now. We grow aged, feeble, crippled, in the body, that we may find our soul's life and strength, our joy and peace —in God, in the things that are unseen, and—eternal—in the religion of the Cross, which means the fulness of Love, 'the fulness of God.' And

those words come back to me now, and find me—what? A stunted soul, in a crippled body."

Soon after my grandfather had said those last words in a very quiet way, he suddenly exclaimed with more energy than I thought possible, "But after all, let us not forget that we know and understand a great deal more about the Eternal, and come much closer to Him by self-sacrifice and faithful effort to please, and serve, and love Him, than by any amount of mere emotional transport or æsthetic enjoyment of the Beautiful and Sublime, even though we closely identify all that beauty and glory with God. Nevertheless, I am sure that emotional rapture is infinitely good and blessed. Of both I would say, 'This should ye do, and not leave the other undone.' But I *have* left so much undone."

Then I thought I would tell him he had a right to remember how constantly he had been always trying to make others happier than their poor lot seemed to permit—genuine, philanthropic work it seemed to me.

"True," he answered, as I thought somewhat reluctantly, "I did think a great deal how I could help others, as well as myself, to enjoy existence. . . . But I fear enjoyment was the grand thing in my estimation ——"

"And freedom," I added.

"Yes; freedom, as the necessary condition of enjoyment, and the enjoyment was all to be of a

pure and noble character," he continued. "But still it was a worship of Joy, perhaps an idolatrous worship. And yet I know that I always wanted to make it lead up to, unfold, cherish a deeper and mightier love of God than the religious world generally seems to possess. . . . But, with regard to what you call my philanthropic work, we needn't say much about that. It was all done on the lines that most pleased myself. Still," murmured the old man half to himself, as if fatigued with talking, "still it *was* a right and good thing—I know it as well now on the edge of the grave as at bonny eighteen—to try and help folks, especially poor hard-working folks, to enjoy life, and so to believe in the love of God and the kingdom of His dear Son."

I asked him on one other occasion, whether when his great and terrible trouble came upon him, and his wife was taken from him, he felt that his faith and trust were strong enough for the strain.

"No," he answered, "not at first. I felt swept away from all anchorage, could not realize God's love at all, nor get reconciled to Him and His chastening. . . . Ah, those *were* dark days, but He brought me out of them. Though I turned against Him, he bore with it all, and brought me back to Himself lovingly, gently—so that after a little while I bent my will to His—wholly. . . It was during this struggle I first fully understood that wonderful passage in Francis Newman's book,

'The Soul'—a book which you ought to read, my boy, some day—in which he says that for true and perfect piety, 'the soul must become a woman.' . . . It was only when the thought came sweeping through me, one most miserable night, that I ought to yield and did yield myself wholly up to God and His loving righteous will, in adoring love and trust, not in my own strength, but yet, *longo intervallo*, as our Lord Jesus Christ did in Gethsemane, that I gained the peace which nothing afterwards could take away." He spoke with some solemnity, and I didn't like to add another word; but the next day, referring to that quotation from Francis Newman, I said, "Yet you have often told me, Sir, there is a lot of spiritual fighting to be done, and that needs the masculine element?" "Yes; indeed," he answered, "plenty of that, with the devil and all his imps of mischief and sin hammering away at us. Aye, aye, you must *conquer* your peace on many a battle-field. But I was speaking—Newman was writing—only of the soul's relation to God—not the devil. Never forget, my lad, that perfection is gained only by the union of both the masculine and feminine elements of character." So I pondered those things in my heart.

Well, these and other conversations I had with my grandfather occasionally, were an unspeakable privilege. But I feel now they brought with them a terrible curse. For how have I benefited by

them! Privileges bring proportionate duties and responsibilities. And well and faithfully, forsooth, have I not availed myself of mine! "As with a sword in my bones, my enemies"—say, rather, my friends—"reproach me." . . . I hear only the echo of a desolate cry, "Where is thy God? thy Deliverer?"

I wrote, and copied out, all the foregoing from time to time, in a few intervals of freedom from pain; and when I had finished I marvelled greatly I had undertaken to furnish any recollections of the talk of a man so infinitely above me. But as I told my little circle of hearers, before I read what I had written, those "Recollections" of his life and religious theories published some time back—called "Charles Dayrell: A modern Bacchanal, or the Worship of Joy"—were written, no doubt with excellent intentions and a competent knowledge, but, perhaps, not always with a sufficient apprehension or lucid explanation of my grandfather's theory and aim of existence. Hence, they have not been understood as they would be by those who conversed with him in his latter days. For the world goes now at a killing pace, and doesn't stop to guess riddles, or interpret parables. But the clergyman, Mr. Rivers, from whose letter to me I quoted above, told me a good deal more of his friend, which I noted down at once. He also gave me sundry MSS., so that I fancy I am better read in the subject than I often was in

the papers set us in the Oxford "Schools." I specially noted the following remarks by the good parson, who, by-the-bye, wanted me, when I took my degree, to become a parson myself. I thought at the time I wasn't quite such an old woman, yet, as to entertain *that* idea. But these matters look rather differently to me now. It might be, I don't know, but it might be for me, now, a beautiful and blessed life, if only I ever became worthy and fit for it in body and soul. But I have no strength in the one, and little faith in the other. The work itself is very noble —and many of the workers. This very man was worthy of being Mr. Dayrell's friend, for he was a thoroughly hearty muscular old Christian, had pulled well in his college "eight," and shone in his "eleven," was utterly free from humbug, or cant, "starch," or "bounce," and has gone in all his life for manly sports, as well as earnest praying and preaching. Well, this man, I say, shortly before his death, answered a question of mine one day, thus:

"It always seemed to me that the main thought of the so-called 'Modern Bacchanal,' your grandfather, which indeed possessed him with magnificent and over-mastering power—impelling him to spend his life in giving it utterance by every act and word in his power—was this: He well knew to how large an extent all Joy, even satisfaction, with one's own condition, tends in our days of

strength and health to lead us away from God to make us, in fact, feel independent of Him. Yet he also believed that there was no permanent satisfaction and joy apart from God, that we are made for infinite and eternal life in Him, for a divine life of Love and Joy in Him, and with Him, and that we find, therefore, only bitterness and death, 'a great and terrible wilderness, fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought,' in our wild passionate strivings after pleasure and freedom. Nevertheless, he felt sure that God gave mankind such abundant joy in the Youth of the World, and evermore still showers it down upon us in happy personal childhood, in order to lead us to long for it, to aspire towards it, as one great end of our existence. How then are we to

> "'. . . . . impart
> The purity of heaven to earthly joys,
> Expel the venom and not blunt the dart—'

how make it *safe* to enjoy, how make that enjoyment minister to our upward progress, and nourish our higher life instead of cherishing selfishness, sensuality, and living without God in the world?"

Now, I don't mean I understood all this when the clergyman said it, nor when I first began to try and work out more fully my grandfather's creed; but on looking back I can see that these and other thoughts which were gradually "borne in" upon me, trace the lines in which, though not with much success, I tried to live and work. But for

years after I had left Eton, I did not, could not, look at the matter in what is called a religious light —or, rather, I suppose, in what is really the Christian light. It may, must have been a *religious* light, I think. For if the *cultus* of the early Greeks and Persians, Hindoos, and other heathen folk, especially of the poets and dreamers in every age and clime, was religious, if as Mr. Dayrell so strenuously maintained, the whole inner life of his modern hero, Lord Byron, was intensely religious, if Professor Seeley's deeply interesting book on "Natural Religion" is right and true, then no doubt my mind and heart, nearly my whole inner and outer being, were filled with what he called and what I know was, religious life. But Christian!—no. I haven't come to that yet, by a long shot—perhaps never shall. Hence it will not seem strange that with my ardent longing to do some justice to my grandfather's theory and aim of life, and with all my own unceasing speculations concerning a life of pure and perfect gladness, freedom, love, there constantly mingled the thoughts and aspirations, the poetry and passion, the raptures, the errors, the misery and remorse, of that great poet just named, towards whose wonderful soul the "Modern Bacchanal" felt drawn with such irresistible power. True, Charles Dayrell merely shared the common madness of his day. Since then there have, indeed, been regularly recurring periods of indifference and dislike, indignation, or hatred, towards Lord Byron. Witness Carlyle's sneers and the virulent attacks on him of

recent rival and jealous poets, who not only were unworthy to loose his shoe-strings, but who often had not the excuse for their censures which writers of high moral purity and piety undoubtedly sometimes had. "Action and reaction," we were told at school, "are equal and contrary;" and the enthusiastic admiration of one generation is the natural precursor of the indifference or antagonism of the next.

But returning to my "muttons," which I can often neither lead nor drive, when I had got as far as this in my journal, I told my kind little circle one sunny afternoon, I had done as they bade me, giving a side glance at the Lady Stella, who returned my look with a pretty little saucy toss of her head and, I thought, with a pleasant smile.

"That's very good of you, so far, Mr. Dayrell," she said, "but now are you going to burn your journal?"

"Probably *you* will wish to do so, if I begin reading any of it aloud."

My bashful humility was voted a weak pretence, and it was clear they meant to run the risk. So I read portions of it, here and there, skipping most of my melancholy—mad—ruminations, but giving all I had written about my grandfather. When I had finished, there was a deep silence—like that which the poets say may be felt. I know I felt it, for the evening shades had gathered round us, and I thought perhaps they were all asleep, or I might have bored them to death; and I wished for a moment I had

never written or read a line of the wretched rubbish then in my hands. Presently I heard a long-drawn breath—not a snore, but a deep sigh from one of the party, and my mother and sisters whispered thanks; and then the voice that used to be to me the sweetest on earth, yet which had often jarred on me so painfully, just murmured, "Thank you very much. It is very interesting;" and the voice was soft and gentle, and it added, "Mr. Dayrell's reading is like music, is it not?" So I was satisfied for the nonce. My sleep was very sweet to me that night.

CHAPTER VIII

The next day, which was a Saturday, the home party all declared I hadn't looked so bright and well since my accident, and that it was quite clear I must go on writing—and reading what I wrote. I was about to reply when the door opened and that jolly young duffer, Fred Ellerslie, was announced. He had come to stay till Monday. I was not the only one of the party delighted to see him. He was one of the best and most sensible of all my old college cronies, and the first to come down to the Priory after my accident to inquire and sympathize. His decidedly cynical turn of mind and manner concealed a lot of kind generous feeling, and there was something in his cool, self-contained pleasantry and quiet, genial, though rather shallow philosophy, that gave the combined impression of sunshine and a bracing sea-breeze. So he was always welcome, though he could not often spare time to come. After a while, I began to think he specially enjoyed talking to one of my sisters, and didn't wonder if her eyes brightened when he came. The mere sight of him did one good.

Of course he joined politely in the demand my

mother and sisters were making on me to read some more of my Journal. I affirmed that I had nothing more worth reading, when the door again opened, and Lady Stella with her cousin were ushered in. When they understood the question discussed, they both declared that they had quite made up their minds that I must now give them some insight into Mr. Dayrell's vehement admiration for Lord Byron, and show them how they were to reconcile all that they knew of the one, with his admiration and worship of the other.

"Do you then really care," I said, "to know anything more about Byron? I thought nobody knew or honoured him now."

"Then I for one am nobody," replied Stella. "I admire him more than I can tell you, and I want to hear all you can tell me, or at least read to us all, on that subject. Especially I should like to hear that lecture (if it won't bore Mrs. Dayrell), which I think you said you had found among your papers. I mean the one he gave at Oriel."

"Yes, I have it. I believe it was taken possession of by that same friend of my grandfather's who wrote me the letter I read you, Mr. Rivers. I know he was present and heard it delivered. At all events he gave it to me shortly before he died."

"Please read it to us." Once again the momentary earnestness, almost eagerness, with which Stella asked this, was such a contrast to her usual *non-*

chalance that it went to my heart, and almost took away my breath. But I was in a weak, foolish state, then at all events, if not all my life. And if nobody else in the whole world had cared about Byron what would it matter? But *her* interest in him and his poetry made me sure that some others would feel as she did. And certainly it did me a power of good, reading to her; for she sat listening so absorbed that her work was dropped after a time, and it struck me that she shaded her face that we might not see how much she was interested. Before beginning to read, I explained that the writer described the whole scene, and Mr. Dayrell's performance of his task that evening at Oriel, now nearly seventy years ago, just as he witnessed it. He said that St. Austell had kindly consented to take the chair, and that Arnold and Milman were both present. He also mentioned that my grandfather had written out his lecture, but gave it extempore from a few notes or *memoriter*, and that the MS. which had come into Mr. Rivers' hands was what I was about to read, with that gentleman's own descriptions. I added that it seemed to me eloquent; but if the ladies thought its style bombastic, they must remember it was delivered by an enthusiastic young undergraduate to men chiefly as youthful as himself, and that the enthusiasm of youth was sometimes nearer the truth than the chilling criticisms of age.

"I am not hitting at you, mother," I added, "for

you are youthful and blooming as ever, while the rest of the party are decidedly juvenile."

Lady Stella looked as if she knew of whose criticisms I was most in awe. Then when the tea-table was cleared, I fired away.

THE CLERGYMAN'S ACCOUNT OF HIS FRIEND AND FELLOW STUDENT'S, CHARLES DAYRELL'S, LECTURE ON BYRON AT ORIEL IN 1818.

Much less of course was then known about the personal history of the noble poet than is the case now; and I remember that my friend Charlie had to begin by telling his audience a little concerning Byron's fortunes and early career. He described some of his early school experiences, just glanced at his mother's temperament and character, at the difficulties attendant on the want of an adequate income to support the dignity of his title, his first attempt at versification, his treatment by the press, especially by the *Edinburgh Review*. Then the lecturer glanced at Byron's first Continental travels, and particularly dwelt on his visit to Greece, his ardent sympathy with the oppressed inhabitants of that glorious land, and with the victims of oppression, not only in far-off climes, but with his wretched and unromantic countrymen at home, especially the Nottingham Frame-breakers. He adverted to Byron's speech in the House of Lords on the 27th February, 1812, on behalf of those unfortunate and deluded men, read a few extracts from it, and showed what

a genuine spirit of human brotherhood glowed in his heart and shone forth in every part of that eloquent composition. Then he dwelt on the poet's singularly quick and ready sympathies, with "all sorts and conditions of men," on his warm and generous affections, on the strength and ardour of his youthful friendships; on the readiness with which he yielded to the high and pure influence of such men as Mr. Becher, who had rebuked him for the rather licentious tone of one or two of the poems in the first collection he prepared for the press. "I can imagine," said the young 'advocatus diaboli,' as doubtless some considered the speaker, "no greater proof of Lord Byron's recoil at that early age, from all that his conscience, when roused, told him was degrading, than the fact that in one of the most exciting moments of his early life, when just on the eve of sending forth to the world his first poetic venture, he actually destroyed the whole impression, rather than that the objectionable poem should go forth to the world.

"But," he continued, "I know from many sources of information that the evil in Lord Byron's character and life which we must all deeply deplore, and which we have no choice but unsparingly to denounce, is not the vice of a degraded sensualist, of a man who willingly gives himself to what is evil, but of one who is continually aspiring to a nobler and purer life —of one who, owing to the misfortune of his early training, to the absence of high moral and religious

influences among those around him; and, above all, in consequence of the extraordinary force of his own splendid, nay, awful endowments, is at intervals suffering degradation and defeat instead of realizing his nobler dreams. I venture to say all this because I think that a just appreciation of Lord Byron's character is essential for a profitable consideration of Lord Byron's poetry—essential certainly to that estimation of both which I presume to bring before you in following up the speculations and fancies to which many of you gave so kind an encouragement last year. (Applause.) This man seems to me to supply us with what we need for the completion of those investigations into the Dionysiac cult, chiefly and abundantly by what in him and his works we have so reverently to admire—partially by what we have so sternly and sorrowfully to condemn. If it is well for us to proclaim a new and wider view of the meaning of religion and worship, of the worship of Nature, and of the Author of Nature—a truer and more adequate view of the glorious Gospel of the living Christ—it is not only well, but imperatively required of us that we should understand what we can from this great Apostle of Freedom, of the worship of Beauty, of Nature, and of Love."

I could see that some of Dayrell's audience, during these latter sentences, watched the chairman's face with curiosity, and others with anxiety. St. Austell himself, however, betrayed little of the uneasiness which probably he felt, as he began to doubt whether

he had done quite right in taking the chair. Nevertheless, he had great faith in Dayrell, and felt that, if necessary, he could protest at the close of the lecture against any heresies, moral or theological, too flagrant to pass unnoticed. It was some satisfaction that such eminent clerical gownsmen as Mr. Milman and Mr. Thomas Arnold were sitting beside him, and were almost equally compromised with himself. But those gentlemen's countenances showed signs so far of only unqualified satisfaction and deep interest in all the young orator's remarks.

The speaker himself, unconscious of the perturbation he was causing in some of his hearers, and wholly lost in his subject, growing more earnest and impassioned as he proceeded, continued thus:

"It seems to me that Lord Byron's poetry, his whole life and soul, are inspired with an intense and passionate desire for three of the greatest blessings revealed to man by the Infinite Father, viz., Freedom, Beauty, Love, and less ardently (unconsciously as it were, and too often with a cry of despairing pain) for that Joy which comes from admiring, worshipping, possessing what is grand and glorious, beautiful, ennobling, loving, and lovely. The poet's moral and spiritual life seems, *in its essence*, to be a fiery ceaseless aspiration after these blessings; and I believe he has been sent among us that we also may be helped to aspire towards them, each of us according to our capacity. See, first, how this passion for Freedom glows in him, and is kindled by him in us

through page after page of some of the finest passages of modern poetry. I am not now venturing to express either approval or censure of the particular forms in which he manifests his desire to pass beyond the daily round of ordinary life, to range with unfettered power over lake and mountain, through distant lands and

> "'O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
> Our thoughts as boundless and our souls as free,'—

or the loftier ardour he manifests, to rise above the bounds of human existence—his longing to soar into higher and vaster realms of being.

"It would occupy far too much of your time if I were to quote passages from his writings in illustration of the thoughts now thrown out for your consideration; but if they are not familiar to any of those present they will find it an interesting study to search for them in his works. I have already reminded you of his generous sympathy with the enslaved and the oppressed, how earnestly he showed that his desire for Freedom was not for himself alone."

[Here I remember interrupting myself by saying: "As a striking confirmation of what my grandfather there urges, let me quote the following fine passage from the recent admirable sketch of Byron in the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* —by Professor Minto, of Aberdeen, I am told. He has been speaking of Byron's sympathies with the oppressed in all ages, and then adds that his 'ardent battle-cry for freedom in the first and

second cantos of *Childe Harold* rang through this country like a clarion peal. And in a luxurious selfish age, when it was becoming the fashion to sneer at all generous struggles for liberty, to cringe and truckle to insolent oppression and aristocratic tyranny in high places, Byron strode forth on the side of the oppressed, and has become the greatest preacher of Liberty and Brotherhood which this age has produced.' Then resuming the reading, I continued:]

"Who does not remember Byron's eloquent tribute to the heroism of the Spanish peasants, and especially of their women in the life-and-death struggle of that heroic people against the Corsican despot? And who can doubt that those immortal strains of mingled grief, indignation, and stirring martial appeal to the enslaved descendants of Themistocles, Miltiades, Leonidas, to those who inherit the language, the literature, the name and fame of Homer and Plato, of Sophocles, Æschylus, Euripides, Pericles, will at last rouse them also to a final and victorious struggle with their cruel licentious tyrants? (applause). Yes, a time will come when the oppressed of every nation will recognize what they owe to this great poet, and the meaning of his life and writings will one day be understood.

"'Yet, Freedom, yet—thy banner torn, though flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the wind.
Thy trumpet-voice though broken now and dying,
The loudest yet the tempest leaves hebind."

(Here the applause broke out again, and the chairman, interposing, suggested that as the address was rather a "Concio ad clerum" than to a large popular audience, it might be better to reserve the applause, which he was sure would be well deserved, till Mr. Dayrell had concluded his remarks, whereupon the speaker continued:)

"Selfish worldlings, mocking at all enthusiasm, and pointing to errors and inconsistencies in Byron's character and life, which we so deeply lament, may claim him for one of their own base crew; but, after all, the critic is right who has exclaimed that 'in Byron the pulse of heroism beats beneath the garb of the cynic.' For though the eagle may have once and again stooped to the dunghill, and in moments of degradation have seemed to scoff at the sun, it is an eagle still, and will soar aloft again, above all baseness and evil, up to his native skies. But indeed this passionate thirst for Freedom may be seen in Byron's poetry wherever he feels inspired by the divine afflatus of the Goddess, the Spirit of Nature whom he worships so enthusiastically and loves so devotedly. It is when he gives himself with entire self-abandonment to the beautiful and sublime influences of Nature that *we* also feel carried out of ourselves by his aspirations, and long to range far, far beyond the limits of our own poor mortal state. I think it is in these desires and impulses that we find an explanation of what is otherwise so mysterious in

this devoted lover of Freedom—I mean his sympathy with, qualified admiration for, the greatest tyrant of the present, almost of any age — Napoleon Buonaparte. Doubtless at one time Lord Byron looked on him as so many others once did, as the apostle of Liberty, the champion of oppressed nationalities—all the more because of the tyrannical and priest-ridden character of the governments with whom he warred. But when that illusion was cruelly dispelled, there still remained the spectacle of a gigantic intellect and almost superhuman will, rising above all obstacles and opposition, transcending the ordinary limits of earthly life and power, which struck so responsive a chord in Byron's soul, and blinded him at times to the baseness of the despot, while it thrilled him with admiration for the greatness of the conqueror.

"Looking then to what Byron has done in the cause of Freedom in such an age as this—lying as it does at the feet of Carlton House and Beau Brummell, forging degrading fetters for our social life, with the power of Castlereagh and Sidmouth still paramount for our political thraldom" (of course some marks of painful dissent challenged these sentiments; but Arnold and others uttered subdued approval) "shall we not honour and thank this man as long as any of us retain the virtues of freemen, and cannot crouch with satisfaction in the fetters of slaves? What! are we always to be in bondage either to the hard outward yoke of human oppressors, or to the miserable

delusions and hollow forms of a corrupt social state? And if we free ourselves from these bonds must we still be in slavery to the senses, to the forms and fetters of Time and Matter? If the young eaglet be imprisoned in its shell, do not its folded wings at least predict and proclaim its future freedom? And shall we have these glorious aspirations folded up within our souls, and not know of a surety that it *is* intended they should one day be gratified? I know that in the earliest stages of all Progress and Civilization there must be restraint and coercion—that there can be no true freedom without Order and Law. But when the due sacrifice of a portion of our liberties has been made to secure true and increasing freedom, when society and individuals have been bound down by rigid artificial fetters, and women especially have been tamed and cramped into models of servile propriety, is it not well if some wild god of Freedom and Joy should come bounding over the mountains?—that emancipated multitudes should rise at his call and shout 'Evoe, Evoe! All hail, Dithyrambus!' Yes, it *is* good for mankind when the day of emancipation breaks and a reaction against our thraldom dawns—when it becomes both needful and wise to give full swing to our enthusiasm, free play to our impulses and aspirations for a boundless liberty, and an unfettered flight.

"Rome and her subject-world once reposed in peace beneath the beneficent sway of the Antonines and Trajan—in majestic tranquillity, in degrading corrup-

tion, bereft of freedom, filled to the brim with Order, Law, Security, Profligacy and—Peace. Then creeping slowly, nearer and nearer, came the free children of German forest and Scythian plain—came first to be conquered and enslaved—'butchered to make a Roman holiday'—and then to hurl themselves with irresistible fury and accumulating strength on Roman civilization and world-wide putrefaction, an incarnate Nemesis, a myriad-handed avenging deity—purging the Roman world by fire and blood, until they restored to European life the vital forces of individual, social, and political freedom, by kindling a new spirit of enterprise, purity, manliness and truth. The deluge of Barbarism was the infusion of these elements into European civilization, of revolt against all hackneyed formalisms and lying slaveries—the restoration of the force and play of unrestrained individual will and energy to a system which, but for that restoration, must have miserably perished of its own rottenness and bonds. And looking to what the condition of social and political life in England has been during the last half century—the degraded and effete condition to which a sensual and sycophantic civilization has reduced it, and which in a neighbouring country was so recently and terribly purged by social volcanic fires—I can conceive of few higher titles to our fervent gratitude than the service which Lord Byron has rendered us by his immortal poems.

"Turning to the second characteristic of his poetry, I would ask you to observe his impassioned love for

the Beautiful in every shape and form (especially in the scenery of Nature) wherewith the Eternal Father has enriched the Universe. On this point I need say but little; for to pretend to prove that Byron loves and worships Beauty would be like attempting to demonstrate that in Alpine heights and valleys dwells all that is most beautiful and sublime in Natural Scenery. The grandeur and loveliness of Nature speaks for itself, and to argue that Byron has rendered an immeasurable service to his fellow-creatures by helping them to behold and worship Beauty in all its varied aspects, would be like proving by syllogism that Handel's Messiah is magnificent music. But on the third characteristic to which I referred, it seems more needful to say a word or two. I mean the wonderful craving for Love, the yet more wonderful *capacity* for loving, which Byron's life and character manifest. It is not needful, in this case, either, to cite passages or proofs to show the existence of either of those qualities in the great poet, any more than to prove that he fosters our perceptions of beauty. Neither is it necessary to discuss the extent to which his youthful environment, his extraordinary imagination and temperament, undefended by high religious principle, may have hurried him into momentary excesses, grossly exaggerated by cruel Rumour, yet at the best as unworthy *of* him as they have been lamented *by* him. I am not here to impeach or to defend him—nor to describe the burning shame and sorrow with which one is compelled to

believe even partially in the failings of such a man. But it is because I do believe in my heart that Byron has a glorious work to do for the world in preaching not only the gospel of Freedom and of Beauty, but also of Love, that I would ask you to remark two or three points of vital importance in this matter. If he were the mere dissolute profligate which some would have us believe, he certainly could preach no true gospel to any human being on so awful and glorious a subject. Therefore I would ask you first to note his romantic and ardent love for his young Scotch nurse, Mary Duff, in his ninth year (scarcely as old as Dante when he first fell in love with Beatrice), and then for his cousin, Miss Parker, when not yet in his teens. Then I would remind you of the depth, fervour, and constancy of his school-friendships, those pure and ardent attachments which in the very extravagance of their ardour indicate more surely even than his later attachments for persons of the opposite sex, the real craving and capacity for love in his essential nature. I know something, I may be permitted to say, respecting Byron's friendship for Lord Clare, and of what he felt when they parted as boys and met as men. But, passing over those 'young dreams,' let me ask you to reflect on his passion for Miss Chaworth. No youth, I believe, loves a girl older than himself, and especially one who looks on him as a mere boy, except with a very pure and beautiful love. Byron's romantic attachment to that lady, and the terrible blight which her

refusal has cast over his life, are to my mind convincing evidence of the innate purity of his craving and capacity for love. But indeed all that I have ever heard on this subject (and I think I know nearly as much as may or ought to be known about it by the ordinary public) proves that he has never really sought or delighted in coarse or licentious ways. That he may have been—was—thrown, flung as it were, momentarily into vice under the fearful reaction of suffering from that disappointment, I have admitted —but I must solemnly affirm that everything tends to show, in his relations to the other sex, that he has always yearned for a permanent attachment, a true deep love, not the mere gratification of a sensualist's desires.

"After his disappointment, and the reactionary excesses which may have followed it, it is manifest to those who have known him and his history that, though seeking woman's love in a relation which neither morality nor religion can sanction, it was a love deep and pure, constant and tender, which held him in its bonds. If you doubt, read his poem to the memory of 'Thyrza,' and never doubt again. But does not the same truth shine forth clear to the seeing eye and understanding heart from the descriptions of love which abound in his poems, and which are so constantly presented that they must indubitably flow from the very depths of his nature? Is it not sufficient to refer to the description of Conrad's love for

Medora . . . 'tried in temptation, strengthened by distress, Unmoved by absence, firm in every clime' . . . of Zuleika and her lover, of Kaled and Lara, Sardanapalus and Myrrha? Or turn to the loves even of Manfred and of Cain, but especially of Torquil and Nenha? Where will you find stronger evidence of the existence of the capacity and craving for pure and faithful love than in these delineations? Look, for instance, at that stern denunciation of unhallowed passion in the second canto of 'Childe Harold,' stanza 35; and then at that wonderful description of pure and faithful love in his poem of 'The Island,' canto II., 16, which begins thus:

> "'And let not this seem strange; the devotee
> Lives not in earth, but in his extasy.
> Around him days and worlds are heedless driven,
> His soul is gone before his dust to heaven.
> Is Love less potent? No—his path is trod,
> Alike uplifted gloriously to God. . . . '

Mark how in that ideal conception pure and absorbing love, even in the humblest hearts, is linked on the one hand with worship, aspiration, and union with God; on the other, with self-forgetfulness, self-abnegation. In the same strain are the lines:

> "'Yes, love indeed is light from Heaven;
> A spark of that immortal fire
> By angels shared, by Allah given,
> To lift from earth our low desire.
> Devotion wafts the mind above,
> But Heaven itself descends in love;
> A feeling from the Godhead caught

To wean from self each sordid thought;
A ray of Him who formed the whole;
A glory circling round the soul!'

"True to thoughts like these, how pure and beautiful is the love of Torquil and 'the young savage' of the South Sea Islands, for it is their whole existence. The poet knew too well that mere animal passion would soon pall. Hence that he should have described such love as that between Torquil and his young bride to be so all-satisfying, is proof abundant that he knew how beautiful and blessed it is. Of course *we* can hardly imagine their love sufficing for happiness, with so little variety and outward interest in it. But that the poet could imagine and describe it as sufficient shows, what so much beside in his character and writings declares, viz., the pure, unselfish, spiritual love which he is capable of feeling, and continually does feel, with extraordinary intensity.

"Mind, I do not say it is love in its highest character; thank God, there is a region above even that we have been contemplating, and to which we are invited to soar—namely, the realm where that love reigns supreme which illuminated the Cross of Calvary. But this last is not within my province to speak of now. And I say boldly, that of simply human love—pure, constant, ardent, deep—Byron is an apostle, a teacher, of the highest and noblest description."

(St. Austell here was visibly discomposed, and

Milman looked perplexed. Arnold drew a long breath, but turned again to the speaker with renewed interest. Charlie pushed on with unabated ardour:)

"Remember, I am not defending all Byron's conduct, nor all the forms in which he has madly sought the realization of his dreams. But let me point you to such passages as that beginning 'Clarens, sweet Clarens,' in the third canto of 'Childe Harold' (99th stanza); to the stanzas descriptive of Egeria in the fourth canto; and perhaps not least of all, in addition to those previously mentioned, to the descriptions of the love of Marino Faliero and Angiolina in the 'Doge of Venice.' Do you think a reckless, ingrained libertine could have written that singularly pure and noble tragedy? Never! . . . Its author had a right to ask the goddess of 'Egeria's fountain' —when, in some of the most beautiful verses of 'Childe Harold,' he is speaking of love's immortal transports—that crucial question,

> "' . . . . Could thine art
> Make them indeed immortal, and impart
> The purity of heaven to earthly joys?'

This, this — the purity of heaven bestowed on earthly love—is what that great poet has sighed for with all the infinite longing of a soul created in the Divine image, to share in Divine love. Do not mistake me. I am not for a moment pretending that his actual life has not some-

times fallen far below his ideal. Whose does not? That man's, only, who has no loftier aspiration than that which the poor and base realities of his own life, and that of his companions, can supply. Is it not given us to see that the abounding love Lord Byron manifests for Nature in all her varied forms, that longing to blend his being with hers in reverent yet ardent devotion, springs from the same deep source as that craving for human love which flashed out so strikingly in those youthful attachments to which I have alluded, and which has burned so brightly or so luridly in his maturer years? I maintain that this longing for love, this capacity for giving it, this desire for union, harmony, blended life, this admiration for the Beautiful and Sublime, are all essentially religious; and however mournfully at times perverted or defiled by human weakness and sin, are, in their inmost nature, heavenly and divine.

"In a letter written by a man, who is believed by those who know him to be one of the deepest thinkers and truest poets of the age, I mean Samuel Taylor Coleridge, which I was privileged to see the other day, he says: . . 'there is *a religion in all deep love.*' His words confirm so strikingly what I have been trying to express, though referring primarily to a mother's love, that I venture to hope you also will admit their truth, and allow that there is religion in Byron's deep love for Nature—aye, and in all deep love of human

beings for one another, even when defiled by some base alloy.

"But has Byron's worship of Nature and Beauty, of Freedom and Love, brought him Joy? Has he attained to any state or condition in any department of human life, whether spiritual or material, religious or secular, in which we can wisely desire to dwell with him, or yet a state to strive after in our humbler measure? I fear the answer, if given by himself or by those who love and honour him, would be made, not with exultant songs of praise and gladness, but rather with a sigh of disappointment, if not with a groan of despair. 'If it were given!' did I say? Alas, it is given in almost every page of his poetry. It would be given in yet sadder tones, I fear, if it were wrung from the deeper secrets of his heart.

"And if the High-Priest of this faith (ought I not to say, as some would urge, the Arch-magician) of this most fascinating, but most delusive worship of Love, Beauty, Joy, Lord Byron, has succeeded so ill, himself, in attaining to Joy and Peace, how has it fared with his unhappy followers? There can be no disputing the vast extent of Byron's influence on Society. That fourteen thousand copies of 'Lara' were sold in about six weeks, is simply one outward proof of the unseen all-pervading power with which his words and thoughts have laid their grasp upon men's imaginations and hearts. But what have they done for the happiness of men? Byron can awaken a desire for all he himself

so passionately desires—but can he gratify it? He can make youthful hearts beat high with yearnings for the life of the gods—can he transport a single human soul to the Halls of the Immortals? Is it well to describe Lake Leman or the Jungfrau, 'Clarens, sweet Clarens,' or those 'Isles of Greece,'

'Where burning Sappho loved and sung,'

or the charms of Zuleika, or 'Life on the Ocean Wave' in such exquisite colours that his own words, so sad and beautiful, describing what he felt in regard to love, can best describe what his despairing votaries feel in reference to all that Beauty, Freedom, Love, and Joy for which he bids them crave :

"'Oh, Love! no habitant of earth thou art—
An unseen seraph, we believe in thee,—
A faith whose martyrs are the broken heart.
But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see
The naked eye, thy form, as it should be.
The mind hath made thee, as it peopled heaven,
Even with its own desiring phantasy;
And to a thought such shape and image given,
As haunts the unquenched soul—parched—wearied—wrung—
[and riven.'

"Yes, this Arch-magician, (or Black-Artist?), can transport our souls upwards to celestial visions, waft us soaring through the blue depths of heaven, and then—not in the malevolence of mockery, but in the impotence of his own enchantments—dashes us down again to the hard cold rocks of common-place, dull and often dreary existence. The fate to which he consigns his victims, is his own. He has found neither Freedom

nor Peace, for himself, I fear—no, nor any real and true satisfaction for those high desires. How then can he confer such infinite blessings on others? But the curse of disappointed hopes, of morbid repinings, of restless dissatisfaction, and discontent, *that* unhappily he can and does impart to thousands—well, if he does not always draw them into those unclean abysses of sensualism, or gambling recklessness, which so often yawn for souls like his, and for the victims of his fearful and most 'uncanny' spells. But if these be the melancholy results of aspiring beyond the limits of our confined and material existence, is it well to teach us to aspire? Were it not a fitter, perhaps a nobler task to show us how to accommodate ourselves to our own humble and limited lot—to make us content with such modicum of freedom, beauty, love, as we can obtain amid our daily routine of duty and of drudgery? Yes! if you ask whether you and I and an innumerable multitude should preach to ourselves that doctrine of resignation. No! a thousand times no, if you desire that the one man out of a million million, the one glorious soul God has sent into the world once in the ages to preach his gospel to the dumb, toiling, suffering sons of men should be asked to hold his peace. I tell you there are ten thousand preachers and teachers striving to fill our hearts with the gospel of resignation, with a deadening sense of the duty of accommodating ourselves to a dreary lot, of never ranging beyond the boundaries of common life and hackneyed routine, for one that dares try

to lift us up to higher and happier realms of being.

"What the civilized world now wants, it seems to me, is a prophet who can train, impel men *to aspire*. That world is suffering from hopelessness, depression, and fear—from a dull, aching void—a sense of disappointed cravings for a good which it believes itself created to obtain, but which it has not yet found—a joyless, unloving weariness of life, and all the pain as well as evil which grow from this state of bondage. It is the result, I imagine, partly of that grand old Puritan and Calvinistic faith which once bore noblest fruits, but has left us now only apples of the Dead Sea filled with venom and bitterness; partly also of the perennial curse of selfish indulgence, envy, apathy, and base animal greed; and, above all, it is a consequence of our having lost those great stirring sources of enterprise and self-denying action supplied by chivalry, by the Crusades, by the discovery of boundless realms beyond the seas, by patriotic wars of self-defence, wars of religion, and even of aggression, which, however full of evil in many aspects, yet undoubtedly did marvellously help to keep men's minds free from dreamy, morbid repinings, sentimentality, and effeminate self-indulgence.

"You complain of the morbid repining and gloomy misanthropy of so much of Lord Byron's writing, and ask if these are satisfactory results of his 'cultus' and his creed. I answer unhesitatingly, Yes! If a man with Byron's genius, lofty aspira-

tions, and deep affections, could have lived the life he has, and yet have been *satisfied*, I should indeed despair of our race. His diseased melancholy, his frequent complaints and disgust at life, are the true answer to those who hold our nature in contempt, and who denounce the folly of believing we were created for a divine existence. Show me a man of exalted genius, of noble, pure, unselfish life, filled with a Christ-like piety, faith, and love—if *he* is overwhelmed with morbid misery of the Byronic type I shall abandon my faith in the glorious destiny awaiting us.—Not till then.

"It is because men are created and destined for perfection that they never can be satisfied with a stunted life; and the more nearly they reach the goal, like Byron, on some lines of advance, if they are not possessed with a profound religious faith and high moral principle, the further they are almost certain, like him, to fall away from it on others. What in such a case can be expected but the melancholy and repinings which are found so abundantly in his writings, and which testify as powerfully (if I may use a trite but noble illustration) to the existence of a hidden glory, one day to be revealed, as the dark cloud with the silver edge witnesses to the moon-lit radiance behind and beyond its gloom?

"Therefore, again I say, let us all be up and doing that we may sternly and successfully combat both the false religion and the yet more deadly evil

that flows from it, of degrading selfishness, frivolity, and vice.

"If there be one duty at the present day more urgent than another surely it is to break away from these cruel bonds that are stifling all the higher life of our souls, quenching even the light of religion in our temples and our hearts, drawing us down to the dens of 'the Epicurean sty.' And shall we reject, silence, crucify the preacher who, whether he knows it or not, whether he be overshadowed by darkness or rejoicing in light, whether he lives worthily or unworthily of his high calling, is, I devoutly believe, sent of God to help deliver us from this galling bondage? Divine inspiration communicated through human messengers must always suffer in transmission. Do not expect of Byron what no prophet ever yet possessed. But be sure that it is just by this profound and passionate sympathy, this yearning which Byron awakens in us for wild and joyous freedom, for the beauty and grandeur of the universe, for devoted constant love, for intense and rapturous joy, that he vindicates our claim to these divine possessions as the destined inheritance intended for man throughout the ages. Silence him, and turn away in scorn or hatred if our existence closes at the grave—if only a mockery of hope, an accursed mirage is offered to our parched lips, *or* if the highest ideal we can reach is just to do our duty and our drudgery day by day, suffer and smile, toil, laugh, and weep till Death comes

and ends for ever the dreary farce. Silence him *not*, nor the voice in your own hearts which answers to his, if you have a grain of faith in God, in immortality, in heaven! Byron is the prophet of Immortal Life. Immortality and Eternity are needful to explain him and his message to man, *and* to explain our vehement response to his glowing words. . . . . Oh, my brothers, I think men do not know," exclaimed the speaker, with a passionate pathos in his voice, "they do *not* know what a prophet has been sent among them in this man!—sent to deliver them from the slavery of their social and political, literary and artistic life, as the French Revolution, however disfigured and defiled at last by terror and crime, came to burst the cruel fetters of millions of bondsmen." (Uneasy movements again, but steadfast attention.) "Let me pray you not to allow my imperfect advocacy to prejudice this great man's claims in your eyes, but to see for yourselves that he has been endowed with those glorious gifts not merely for his own poor enjoyment, or for yours, but that he may lift men out of the crushing bondage in which modern civilization, and alas! too often, modern religion, holds them. He comes to bid us claim our portion in the mountain and the storm, in the ocean and the stars, in the glory of God's Universe, in the love of God which pervades and sustains it—to make us feel that we may, and must aspire to chant 'εἰς ὄρος! εἰς ὄρος! Evoe, Evoe!' evermore.

"But, gentlemen, I beg you earnestly to note that Byron is not merely the prophet of Immortality, the preacher of upward aspirations out of darkness towards the light. He is also and pre-eminently, the preacher of a gospel of Heaven. His visions of beauty and love, of freedom and of joy are surely sent among us to help men to realize heaven amid all the sorrows and sins of earth—to remind them of what they are created to enjoy, and are capable of enjoying.

"Is it not true," exclaimed Dayrell, vehemently, "that we are 'saved by Hope?' But oh, what a thin poor vision, what a miserable shadowy dream, is the thought of heaven for the vast majority even of professing Christians! while as for the rest of society, they *have no hope.* Oh, the misery of letting our religion and our life be wrenched apart —of having earth and heaven separated by a black gulf of fear and care and grinding toil, of base frivolity, or religious gloom! Why was Earth made so beautiful, and earthly life so rich in possibilities, in capacities for the purest enjoyments? Not alone —I think not chiefly—for earthly happiness, but yet more that we might guess in some faint measure what 'eye hath not seen nor ear heard,' but 'what God has prepared for those who love Him.' Unhappily, that which God created around and within us to teach us what our life in Him is meant to be, priests and worldlings alike,—yes, and even the holiest of God's saints—have too

often denounced, scorned and trampled under foot. I know these saints and apostles were right to do so while the world was largely in the clutches of the flesh and the devil—while earthly joy and beauty were so fearfully tainted by selfishness, sensuality and greed. But whenever and so far as Christian holiness and self-sacrifice have purified the world and made the human soul fit for heavenly joy and freedom, ought not the revelations of a gifted genius like this great poet to be welcomed with deepest gratitude as a God-given means of helping the world to be saved by Hope, of making a future life, and Heaven, glorious realities? And note this also, that although, as some of our finest University preachers have taught us" (here Dayrell turned and bowed to the chairman and those beside him), "excessive devotedness to Art and Music and to all the enjoyments of the senses, does, no doubt, tend with fatal force to increase sensuality and slavery to the things that are seen and perishing, yet that a reasonable well-balanced pure delight in Nature and Art, in the Beautiful in any form, marvellously helps to lift the soul alike above the degrading temptations, the changes and chances, the fears and sorrows of the world, and so tends 'to deliver it from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.' . . . And then again, if men had but more peace, hope, joy in their own hearts, if they understood by experience more of what our esteemed chairman was ex-

pounding so powerfully, only last Sunday, in St. Peter's, viz., the apostle's prayer that 'the God of Hope might fill us with all joy and peace in believing'—oh, how much less of wars and quarrellings, of evil gossip and slander, of ill-temper, irritability and revenge there would be in the community—how much less intemperance and vice, of craving for the fleeting comfort and destructive peace gained from pernicious stimulants and narcotics! For is it not true that when people have real peace and joy in their hearts they will not envy and lust and crave for what they have not, or ought not to have? Half men's vices spring from their dullness, their miseries, and their fears. We need the gospel of Byronic aspiration and Bacchantic joy—but born and reared under Christian skies—to counterbalance that unwholesome suffering and unnecessary gloom which is born of ignorance and cherished in sin.

"I have spoken, gentlemen, of Byron as a great heaven-sent preacher of the worship of Hope and Joy, an apostle of the grand truths needed, (beyond much that the world now honours and values,) to accomplish the great revival of Religion without which I do not believe religion will retain its hold upon the civilized nations. But to give us hopes of what some future apostle of this faith may be and do, think what a mighty power for good Lord Byron would have been had he only been blessed with such a mother as England may yet see

for such a son, combining all that mother's fervour and depth of feeling, imagination and passion, with lofty Christian principles, and a holy spirit of Christian as well as of mere instinctive love. Under the early training of a simple devout and affectionate nature free from all cant and superstition, Byron might by this time have become the greatest religious preacher—perhaps Reformer—England has ever seen. And in that case what would be the nature of his preaching? and of his reforms? Ask the Universe whose beauty and glory Byron worships and with which he craves to blend his life—ask the Spirit of Universal Love which has filled, transfigured and glorified its tempted, sinning, suffering child!

"Yet here, perhaps, you will quote to me his own words:

"'But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,'

and you will urge that such a fiery nature as his, with all its marvellous endowments, never could be tamed to that quiet, useful harness, without which no true preacher or reformer could possibly serve his Lord effectually, faithfully. 'Is it so, then?' we sadly ask. Cannot the Lord be well and truly served by a human being just because He has showered down upon him such a glorious wealth of faculties and powers? At first it seems too true. And yet if only this 'passion for high adventure,' 'which can tire of nought but rest,' could only find its true sphere of energy—find its life and joy in leading men up to a worship higher

even than that of Nature or of Man—the worship of a God of Love and Holiness, who has created Nature and Man — in making them more like their God, happy and holy instead of miserable and unclean—helping them to find their glory and their joy in bringing the influences of music, poetry, and the drama, of sweet, refining and manly recreation, of innocent happiness and mirth, of beautiful scenery, into the lives of their less fortunate brethren—oh, what a mighty power for good might not such a man as our ideal Byron become! And, therefore, what a vast and soul-satisfying sphere of existence he would find such a life to be! There are no limits to be set to the influence he might exert by leading the way in disinterested effort to lift folks up to the realms of light and gladness of which he himself is by birth a citizen. Imagine him setting himself to induce high-born and gifted men and women to come down from their Olympic heights to give concerts and poetic readings, dramatic performances for the edification of grimy toilers in factories and workshops, to costermongers and roughs, to hard-worked washer-women and pallid seamstresses, perhaps singing to them in the streets and then speaking to them worthily of Love, Divine and Human, of Duty, and of Joy—of Heaven above and heaven on earth—of the gods of Greece and the God of Jesus! Who could speak on such topics like Lord Byron, if only he were the Byron of the Future, filled with the Spirit of Christ? And who could speak with greater power

to persuade men and women of every rank, thus to live for others' joy and truest welfare, than he who had just been ministering to their joy? Never doubt but that when men of the highest genius are also men of the highest type of unselfish love and devoted piety, they will also be the greatest preachers, reformers, apostles of Christ. For that was a true prophecy, 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me'*—a prophecy which shall yet be fulfilled.

"I know, sir, too well," said Dayrell, in conclusion, as he turned to the chairman, "that I have done the task to which you and other friends so kindly invited me in a very lame and inadequate fashion. I thank you all sincerely for so patiently listening to my rambling remarks. But I do hope I have not entirely failed to show the relation in which I conceive that Byron's life and poetry stand, on the one hand to 'the classic dreams of Greece' and all its beautiful legends; on the other, to that great revival of Religion in the future, that practical application of Christianity to the wants and woes of Humanity on earth, which I trust this nineteenth century is yet to witness. In strains as musical as melancholy, the great German poet, Schiller, has sung his requiem over those wonderful antique 'Gods of Greece,' and you will perhaps let me, in conclusion, quote a few stanzas from that threnody in a fine trans-

* St. John, Ch. xii., v. 32.

lation given me by a poetic friend.* Schiller has been describing in exquisitely melodious and picturesque verse what those beautiful and awful, those lovely or heroic beings were to the ancient Greek, what the rites and ceremonies with which they honoured them; and among the rest he sings of him, the hero of the Dionysiac myth, of whom last year we thought and spoke, in obedience to the magic spells of the great Athenian poet, in his immortal 'Bacchanals.'

"'All your fanes proud palaces resembled,
Honoured were ye in the hero-game,
When the Isthmian festive crowds assembled,
And the chariot thundering onward came.
Yours the curious, mazy, soul-felt dancing
Round the altar decked with offerings rare,
From your brows the crown of victory glancing—
Chaplets on your perfumed hair.

"'Evoes of the joyous Thyrsus-swinger,
And the harnessed panther's splendid wain,
Heralded the mighty Pleasure-Bringer,
Faun and Satyr gambolling in his train;
Phrenzied Mænads round him leaping, soaring,
In their dances praise his generous wine;
And the brown-cheeked god to all is pouring
Goblets of the drink divine.

* * * * * *

"'Lovely world, where art thou? Where thy glory?
Where the fresh bloom of thy youthful prime?
Only in the Fable-Land the story
Can we find of that once happy time.
All thy fields lie desolate and lonely,
Trace of Godhead I no longer view,
Of that life-warm form the shadows only:—
Not the world which once I knew.'

* The late Samuel Robinson, esq., of Wilmslow.

"And then follows his mournful appeal to that mysterious entity of which I have had to say so much to-night, of whom Lord Byron has been so ardent and devout an adorer, even as Wordsworth and Shelley, and many another poet, in their several spheres of genius—I mean Nature—call her what you will but essentially, eternally divine. Time permits me to quote only a few dissevered lines:

"'All unconsciously her gifts bestowing
By her own grand features unimprest,
* * * * *
Gravitation's slavish law obeying,
Godless Nature creeps her round.
* * * * *
Back to their own homes the gods have speeded,
Useless in a world to manhood grown.
* * * * *
Yes, have speeded home! a world forsaking
Of its fairest, noblest charms bereft!
* * * * *
From Time's all-destroying deluge flying,
On the heights of Pindar now they stay;
And what, aye in song, shall bloom undying,
Must to actual sense decay.'"

Then my friend concluded thus:

"But in sad truth is it so, then? Is it only in some beautiful legends, noble tragedy, or lovely song of ancient Greece and modern poetry that all the poetry and beauty of those dreams 'shall bloom undying'? No! If Byron, and men with souls akin to his, if gifted women, and ardent lovers of their race, will but have faith in 'love Divine,' if they will but believe that the Gospel of the Cross is also

the Gospel of the Resurrection, that they who bear that Cross are destined to wear the Crown of Beauty and of Heavenly Life both *here* and hereafter—only believe that dying to Self means rising to Freedom and Love, to Beauty and eternal Joy, that heaven is meant for this world as well as for that which is to come—there are those now rejoicing in their buoyant youth who may live even on this earth to behold in their tranquil age, at least the dawn of a brighter and more glorious day. And if Homer, Hesiod, Euripides, all who in former or later days have sung of the beautiful legends and gods of ancient Greece, if this noble German singer and our English Byron could look down on earth a hundred years hence, and behold the true prophet-poet of the future, drawing millions of earnest happy souls into a heaven on earth, through loving loyalty to the Lord of the Christian Church and of the heathen world, might they not take up Schiller's words in his address to those 'Gods of Greece,' and adapt them thus to a happier strain?

"'O'er the beauteous world when ye presided,
And in Pleasure's gently leading band,
Happier generations yet ye guided,
Lovely Beings of the Fable-land!
Once again, your joyous worship cherished,
Beams in brightness on this fairer day—
For your glorious visions have not perished—
See they rise again in bright array!
Venus Amathusia!'"

The young enthusiast resumed his seat amid a burst of vehement applause, which was renewed

when Mr. Milman moved, and Mr. Arnold seconded, in terms of glowing commendation, a vote of thanks to their "young Oriel brother," and expressed their ardent hope that he might live to promote, and rejoice in beholding, some portion at least of those blissful changes realized, whereof he had so eloquently discoursed. Charlie modestly and gratefully acknowledged the compliment, and thus that brief happy interlude passed away.

Whether Charles Dayrell at this period of his life, as in regard to his other hero, Dionysus, and the Bacchanalian worship, over-estimated the real goodness and innate purity of Byron's character and influence is not a matter that can be determined here or anywhere, perhaps, on earth. If my friend ever thought in after life he had done so, he certainly never wavered in his conviction that all he had now said of Byron's poetry was true, eternally true, and that it was the great 'κτημα ες αεί' for every genuine human soul.

When I had finished reading the good clergyman's MS., which took longer than I expected, the silence was presently broken by my mother and sisters saying, "Thank you" in a very decisive sort of way, as if they meant it; and I remember one of my sisters, Ellen, adding, "My grandfather himself must have had much of the genuine poet in him." Then Stella remarked in those low rich tones which always carried in them deep feeling or cutting sarcasm:

"Thank you very much, Mr. Wilfrid . . . . Nothing like such eloquence has been heard, I imagine, since the days of Demosthenes. I'm beside myself with admi——" She stopped suddenly, as she looked at me, and heard some inarticulate cry. Then she rose, came to my couch and whispered, "Pray forgive me. Make allowance for original sin." And then came that enchanting smile which always made me thankful that she had angered me. Presently she said aloud, "Sad, is it not and wonderful to think how that cruel hypocritical world in which for a short time poor Byron lived, turned on him like Actæon's hounds on their master, to rend and tear him—and do, to this day!"

"But," said my mother, "he must have given them only too much reason, or at least an opening, for their attacks."

"Know you not, dear mother," I answered, "that what the grandest of Greek poets, Pindar, denounced as the basest passion of the human heart, φθονος, envy of superior greatness, is also one of the most prevalent? Yet it is, alas, too true that Byron's own errors and sins gave his detractors the opening of which you speak; which is equally true of all mortals, I suppose."

"Well, don't sigh over it, dear, so wearily. Byron has long been beyond their reach," said my mother.

"Yes, thank Heaven," I answered, "and his

glorious poetry survives both their malice and the paltry venomous attacks upon him of the present day. But oh, how he writhed under them while he lived! It was not, could not be, in the nature of that great poet-soul to be otherwise than bitterly wounded by such treatment from the world whose love, admiration, and sympathy he so ardently desired. But can we doubt that a day will come when his lofty prophecy will be fulfilled—though perhaps not until that far-off time when he will have learnt alike to renounce and despise that personal egotism which those youthful days almost inevitably mingled with his nobler sentiments?"

"Which prophecy?" asked one of my sisters. Then I read from the Fourth Canto of "Childe Harold," the 132nd and following stanzas, beginning with that magnificent invocation to "NEMESIS."

Fred Ellerslie had been a very attentive listener, but had said little or nothing after the reading was over, explaining that his emotions were too deep to permit of their being clothed in the language of ordinary mortals. When we were alone, however, he expressed with unwonted fervour his satisfaction on the whole with the view of Byron's character and work taken by the lecturer.

"Nevertheless," he continued (there was always a 'nevertheless' or a 'but' sure to follow any of Fred's encomiums), "that brilliant and novel metaphor in your great ancestor's prælection about the cloud and its silver lining, allow me to say, with profound

deference, was a glaring mistake. It is not the cloud but the light on its edges which bears witness to the radiance behind."

"Oh, glorious Criticism! be thou my god," I exclaimed. If *fas est et ab hoste*, how much more is it good *ab amico, doceri*. Yet even *amicus*, when posing as critic, should avoid blundering, himself. How could you discern the cloud on the face of the sky at all, I should like to know—how could you perceive the faults and stains on Byron's character, his morbid melancholy and darker sins—were it not for the radiant glory of the moon and of his soul, which reveals both the cloud on the one and the stains on the other—that light which, shining on the edges of the cloud, tells what the brightness will be when the cloud has passed away? Had Byron been a Hottentot instead of a splendid English poet, who would have known or noticed the dark clouds on his character and life? There! Throw up the sponge, eh?"

"By no means. Yet you give food for reflexion, which is salutary, if not pleasant. But seriously, Dayrell, had the modern Bacchanal read 'Don Juan' when he delivered that flaming eulogium on Byron?"

"No. How could he? The first and second cantos, though written, I believe, at Venice in 1818, were not published till July, 1819, and the remainder several years later."

"I'm relieved and—gratified," replied Ellerslie. "I

fancy a man like Charles Dayrell would have sung in a different key, had he then come fresh from a perusal of the luscious descriptions with which, in some parts, that immortal and beastly production is adorned."

"Your epithet is strong—some would say too strong. But I am rather of your opinion, Fred," I replied. "And it staggers one faith, sometimes, in Byron's better nature to remember what he would and did write and—do."

"I don't think it need," replied Ellerslie, "though I'm no means such an enthusiastic Byron-worshipper as you and your progenitor. For looking back to school-days, I remember how loose the whole tone of the fellows in our house was, and how I used to say (and if I had been a poet, should then have written), things the bare recollection of which disgusts me immensely now. Even so with the two or three men who were my particular chums at Eton. Yet they are manly and gentlemanly enough fellows now. So much depends—in those early days, and I suppose at any time till one's character is formed—on the tone of the society one lives in. Is even Shakspeare entirely free from the impure influences of his day? Byron tried hard to live in clean and pure companionship for a time, but subsequently to Thyrza's death, followed after a time by the unfortunate termination of his marriage speculation, he flung himself recklessly into vicious and disgraceful courses—greatly helped on his way

by the bitter slanderous attacks that assailed him from all quarters."

"Right you are," said I.

"And he was still half a child," added Ellerslie, "when he wrote Don Juan—aye and even to the end of his days. But what about Thyrza?"

"Oh, haven't you read that article in the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* on Byron? No? Well, you should as soon as may be. I quoted from it, you remember, when I was reading this lecture. It seems to me first-rate. The writer doesn't ignore Byron's frailties and sins, but takes by far the truest and most judicial view of his real character and life, that, in my opinion, has yet been given to the world. That life of him in the series of 'Men of Letters' is neither fair nor appreciative, and can't be compared with Professor Minto's in my humble opinion. Moore's view is fairly discriminating and impartial, but it was written by an intimate friend, and too near Byron's time to be altogether reliable. Well, what the Professor says about Thyrza is in connection with his belief in the innate essential goodness and purity of Byron's nature and character. Here's another extract I wrote out from it, with which I thought I would not trouble the ladies. '*Extract from Byron*,' *Encyclopædia Britannica*, ix. *Ed.*:

"'Unfortunately for him [Byron] such impetuous and passionate affections as his could rarely find the response for which he craved. In those few

cases where devotion was repaid by devotion, the warmth of his gratitude was unbounded. He loaded poor Thyrza's memory with caresses, careless of what the world might say, remembering only that the poor girl clung to him with unselfish love ; and he returned his sister's tender regard with an ardour and constancy that showed how highly he prized and how eagerly he reciprocated sincere affection. . . . Nothing ever racked him with deeper anguish than the death of her whom he mourned under the name of Thyrza. To know the bitterness of the struggle with this sorrow we have only to look at what he wrote on the day when the news reached him (Oct. 11, 1811). Some of his wildest and most misanthropical verses as well as some of his sweetest and saddest belong to that saddest of dates in his calendar. . . . Mr. John Morley,' the Professor goes on to say, ' . . remarks upon the respect which Byron with all his raillery of the married state in modern Society, still shows for the domestic idea. It is against the artificial union, the *mariage de convenance*, that Byron's raillery was directed . . In spite of debauchery, he was always pining for some constant love, and cursing the fate which had denied it to him. . . This purer sentiment was always enshrined in his heart of hearts, from his boyhood to the end of his days. . . Thyrza, who appears to have accompanied him in some of his wanderings in male attire, would really seem to have been his grand passion. Her "dear sacred name" his

hand, he says years after, would have trembled to write. . . .' Later on, ' . . We find him in his Journal, with her in his memory writing with contempt of the amours of some of his acquaintance, and scoffing at the idea of their applying the name of love to favours which could be purchased with money. . . He has recorded the fact that when he drew the portrait of Zuleika his whole soul was full of her (Thyrza's) memory . . . She is the 'more than friend' commemorated at the close of the second canto of Childe Harold, and she is the original of Medora [and Kaled] as well as the 'presiding genius' of the whole series of Eastern tales . . .'"

"I'm heartily grateful to you, Dayrell," said Fred, "for letting me hear all that. I go with it, every word."

"And now I think of it," I rejoined, "there's a letter from my grandfather to Mr. Rivers, written after reading *Don Juan*, and in response to a manly sort of appeal the clergyman had made to his college friend, two or three months after the appearance of the first and second cantos. It wasn't the kind of thing to bring before the ladies, for, thank goodness, I don't suppose they know much about the poem except from some beautiful extracts in Howard's 'Beauties of Byron.' But you are welcome to see it—in fact I wish not only every admirer and every detractor but every reader of Byron's Don Juan could see and ponder over it. *Le voilà.*

So Ellerslie read the following:

Letter from Charles Dayrell to Mr. Rivers.

". . . Do not suppose for one moment that I would ignore, or even extenuate, the vileness of those detestable portions of Don Juan which I imagine have done more than almost anything else to brand Lord Byron's character with shame. It would be difficult to find words in which to describe alike the grief and disgust with which one regards many portions of that production. All I ask is that in denouncing what in it is vile, we should never forget how much still remains that is so sweet and beautiful and pure as to be akin to heaven. He is, perchance,

"'A fallen angel, but an angel still'

—and hence it seems to me this poem strangely confirms all for which I contended, or pleaded, in that Oriel fling. . . . The simple truth is that we find in it only too evident proof of the terrible ordeal through which Lord Byron has, of late years, been passing—of the effect produced on him by early vicious training, by the strength of his own passions, by his unhappy marriage, and last, not least, by the cruelly unjust treatment he has received at the hands of many of his fellow-countrymen. This treatment, combined with the deadly leprosy of satiety creeping over him in the reaction from excess, and the disgust he feels with himself and the world, has thrown him into the slough of cynicism and prurient bravado; while the innate nobleness of his

heart and soul, ever and anon, break forth in the midst of that pollution and assert his higher nature. It is the old story—'Corruptio optimi pessima est.'"

In another letter, written evidently in answer to a reply from Mr. Rivers, Charles Dayrell remarks "I admit all you urge, but because Byron wrote passages in his poems as inexcusable as they are dangerous and degrading, are we, therefore, to be blind to the exquisite beauty, the profound piety, the tender loving spirit, and passion, of much that we meet with in that poem besides? . . . When, oh when shall we understand that the best of all human attainments, character, work, are but a mingled web of many diverse colours—and that we must be thankful for all that is good and beautiful therein without expecting freedom from evil and error, even in the most saintly or most gifted!" The Oriel *advocatus diaboli* then, growing more impassioned, continues thus—"What! shall we denounce Byron and his glorious Muse, because he shared 'The Fatal Dowry' of Humanity and sometimes ministered in the service of the devil instead of God? Nay, let us rather praise and rejoice in the good, resist and denounce the evil—and in the strength of a higher life than our own, in the might of a purity and a piety given from above, honour all in Byron and his works which comes from the God-like that was in him, while we refuse to be defiled or alienated by that in him and his writings which is 'earthly, sensual, devilish'—emanating from his lower nature and evil circumstances? Poets and authors,

like murderers and ministers of religion, after all, are but imperfect mortals. Do you expect any of the greatest saints and heroes of humanity, any of the most exquisite composers, painters, heroines, goddesses in woman's form, to be without a flaw? Well does a wise German say to us 'Take from Luther his roughness and fiery courage; from Calvin his hectic obstinacy; from Erasmus his timid prudence; hypocrisy [no, that's a mistake] and fanaticism from Cromwell; from Henry IV. his sanguine character; mysticism from Fénélon;' . . (and so on) 'deduct this oppressive *exuberance* from each; rectify them according to your own taste—what will be the result? Your own correct, pretty, flat, useful—for me, to be sure, quite convenient vulgarity. . . Learn to know this exuberance, this leaven of each great character. . . that where d, e, f, is there must be a, b, c: He alone has knowledge of man, who knows the ferment that raises each character, and makes it that which it shall be, and something more or less than it should be' (Lavater's Aphorisms, translated by Fuseli, p. 179-81). Aye, what right, dear Mr. Rivers, have we—full as we ourselves are of imperfections, to expect faultless perfection in others—especially in such a temperament as Byron's? Only a child, a fool, or a madman should be surprised at meeting ugliness, discord, and sin, side by side with beauty, harmony, purity, love, in human character and human life. . . On the other hand, I know too well we cannot help being shocked (and ought to be) each time that the deformity of

a half-developed, undisciplined, ill-taught, yet glorious creature is revealed to us in all its repulsive contrasts. Shocked we must be, for is not this the greatest and saddest contrast on earth? If we did not protest against it, denounce and abjure the vileness, we should ourselves be false to our better nature, traitors to our purest aspirations, and on the high road to coalescing with that deformity. For the hackneyed verse is everlastingly true—

> " 'Vice is a monster of such frightful mien
> As, to be hated, needs be only seen;
> But, seen too oft, we grow familiar with her face—
> We first endure, then pity, then embrace!'

But in the midst of judgment, still let us remember mercy, or at least let us not forget JUSTICE, and abstain from expecting freedom from frailty in one whom divines would truly, I suppose, call an unregenerate child of the dust. No, nor in an angel of light if he had been nurtured, like Proserpine, amid the fairest flowers of earth, and then been dragged for half his days down to the infernal regions. Tell me—is it not true that in proportion as we can hold fast our own kinship with God, we shall be able to honour and love, rejoice in and profit by all that is divine in Byron and his immortal poetry, without being in danger of yielding our hearts to that glamour of Satan by which at times Byron is debased and enslaved. . . .

" Let me quote these lines from 'Don Juan' as the key to the origin of most that is evil in that marvellous production.

" 'And if I laugh at any mortal thing
'Tis that I may not weep; and if I weep,
'Tis that our nature cannot always bring
Itself to apathy; for we must steep
Our hearts first in the depths of Lethe's spring
Ere what we least wish to behold will sleep:
Thetis baptized her mortal son in Styx
A mortal mother would on Lethe fix.

Don Juan, Canto IV. 4.

"So much for my counter-blast to your earnest and powerful impeachment. But thank you for it heartily all the same, and believe me, dear Rivers, ever your old friend,

CHARLES DAYRELL."

The next day Ellerslie having accompanied my mother and sisters to church, quietly remarked, on his return, that he had seen the Lady Stella and Miss Frances Grey there also.

"Was there anything very wonderful in that?" I asked.

"By no means," replied the gentleman—"only in the associations which curiously enough her expressive countenance conjured up in my truant fancy when, reprehensibly, I glanced at it during the service."

"Explain, Sir Oracle," I rejoined, and as he assured us he could do so only by a quotation, I insisted on its production, which, when produced, proved to be the following from Byron's "Giaour":—

"His floating robe around him folding,
Slow sweeps he thro' the columned aisle,
With dread beheld, with gloom beholding
The rites that sanctify the pile.
* * * *

See by the half-illumined wall,
His hood fly back, his dark hair fall,
That pale brow wildly wreathing round,
As if the Gorgon there had bound
The sablest of the serpent braid
That o'er her fearful forehead strayed.
* * * *
Lo!--mark ye as the harmony
Peals louder praises to the sky
That livid cheek, that stony air
Of mixed defiance and despair."

(Here Fred, with subdued but mischievous mirth twinkling in his eye, glanced up at me and paused, evidently half afraid to go further. But as I made no sign, he continued:)

"Saint Francis!

(That's not Miss Grey)

Saint Francis! Keep him from the shrine!
Else may we dread the wrath divine,
Made manifest by awful sign.
If ever evil angel bore
The form of mortal, such he wore.
By all my hope of sins forgiven,
Such looks are not of earth, nor heaven."

"And that," said my mother, rather *mal-à-propos*, when Ellerslie paused, "you consider a description of Lady Stella at church?"

"Oh, dear, no," replied Fred, looking as innocent as a cherub. "I can't think what put the lines into my head."

"Well spouted," I remarked, to relieve the tension of the situation. But I felt so mad with my dear friend that I could have 'brayed him in a

mortar,' all the more because he raised a spectre that had once and again haunted me. I used not to mind it, but since my accident, and while recalling my grandfather's notions about religion, I had grown sensitive on the subject. Nevertheless, as he looked at me apologetically, I repressed my sentiments; and, though I felt savage then, I knew when he was leaving us next day for Oxford, unscathed and serene, I could have given one of my favourite setters—or sisters, if only I could have had him always within call, as in the old Oriel days.

When our little circle next assembled, Lady Stella began playing softly on the piano, as it were to herself; but presently she turned round on her music stool, and said, "I do feel so grateful for all Mr. Dayrell says in that lecture respecting Byron's innate goodness of heart. I'm sure the Oxford Bacchant, and those he cites as witnesses, were right in *that*. But in regard to his and Byron's religiousness, is it not strange—passing strange that — . . ." She paused, and my heart was in my mouth again. I guessed what might be coming. I had felt all along there might, probably would be, strong dissatisfaction, or, at least, dissent on those points, mingled with their pleasure, perhaps among all my auditors, though scarcely a word had been spoken. But presently Stella went on: "Taken only in a poetical light, as Schiller meant it in

that noble ode, which, in the last verse, Mr. Dayrell adapted so skilfully, the worship of the gods is beautiful. We *must* look up to, revere, worship *some*thing. You have given me intense delight by that lecture on Byron, Mr. Dayrell. Thank you, *very* much" (pause). "But, taken seriously, these fancies about a God or gods—" Then again she paused, and continued in a hard tone, as if bracing herself up under strong emotion to say what she thought might be a hateful thing. ". . . Is it not—are not these so-called religious speculations, after all, a mere delusion?" Then seeing me turn, and I suppose glare at her, for I was in a terribly excitable state, she added, rather sadly, "I don't mean that your grandfather was mistaken about Byron. . . . But, might not, perhaps, both Byron and he be under a slight delusion as to religious matters? May it not all be a melancholy mistake, a beautiful, sorrowful, self-deception to imagine that we could know and worship such a Being as Mr. Charles Dayrell spoke of, believed in, and adored? Do you know, dear Mrs. Dayrell," she continued, "it always seemed strange to me how so thoroughly manly a man as your admirable father-in-law, could concern himself so much with imaginary unrealities—vain and shadowy as those about which the so-called religion of this day troubles itself. Beside the stern sad realities of daily life they do seem such poor trifles that it's almost wicked

to give them such a deal of attention. What can we possibly know about them? Surely in the things we can see, and hear, and touch, in this actual world in which we live, there is, or ought to be, enough to occupy all our thoughts and interest? What have we to do with 'things unseen,' especially with some imaginary future world?"

"What!" I exclaimed. "Does it seem to you strange that because Charles Dayrell was so true a man he should have been profoundly religious? I rather think there have been a good many brave and manly men in this world distinguished for piety and faith. What do you say to the Pilgrim Fathers, to Cromwell and his Ironsides, to Columbus, and Martin Luther, to John Howard, and the Smithfield martyrs?"

"Yes, yes; but they were all immersed in their horrid delusions about Satan and Hell, and eternal torments, and, as regarded religion, thought chiefly about saving their souls." (Here an emphatic "No!" was heard from the sofa.) "But your grandfather was a thoroughly healthy-minded man, one who believed in this world and its glorious possibilities, and strove to realize them. He was not blind to the hell here upon earth, nor content to postpone heaven to a visionary future. And, therefore, I say, it seems to me passing strange he should have had his mind so much occupied for seventy years with dreams."

"Ah," observed Mrs. Dayrell, "every active-minded man must have some hobby as a relief to

more serious pursuits; and mythology or religion was Mr. Charles Dayrell's. But he did also concern himself, as you said, very greatly with the things of this life, and with the poor wretches who live without joy in the world."

"Yes, yes; indeed," replied Lady Stella. "In all that work he played, indeed, a noble part. It is the bondage, the delusions under which so good a man seemed to live, that I venture very humbly to deplore."

"But," I replied, repressing strong and very painful feelings, roused perhaps, more by my partizanship with the writer of the lecture, than by the then depth of my own religious convictions, "but my Lady Stella, have you not yourself told me both formerly and now, how you have delighted in the glorious faith and worship of those early Greeks? Have you not said it was a great want of the soul to have something to look up to, to adore?"

"Yes, because with the Greeks it was practically the worship of Nature, of the Beautiful, the Awful, and Sublime, all personified by the imagination in concrete and exquisite forms. Besides whatever *they* may have done, we can believe in the reality of such beings as much or as little as we like, and no harm comes from the muchness or the littleness. But it is not so with your theology. 'He that believeth not shall be damned,' a fate which they also incur, we are told, who partake of the Lord's

Supper without due worthiness—the unbelieving are tied, hand and foot, poor things, along with the abominable and murderers, and all are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone together."

"I think it has been shown," said Dayrell, "that there ought to be a different interpretation put on those passages from what you suppose. But leaving that, I have heard it asked, and it may be well to consider, whence you can get any sufficient sanctions for morality and virtue if you bid men abandon their belief in God. What is the meaning of that word which some of the best men that ever lived call the noblest and most awful ever uttered —Duty. What is it?"

"Oh, 'a stream of tendency in the human soul making for righteousness'—an innate apprehension of things concerning right and wrong. But nevertheless, do not for a moment suppose that I can believe, with certain philosophers, it is merely the result of fortuitous molecular action, or of experience, or calculations of self-interest. That is a vile notion."

"But then, whence and why this stream of tendency—this innate apprehension?"

"I know not—none can know. . . . Do not look shocked. Remember, dear friend, I was brought up in the strictest sect of Low Churchism, in the Evangelical faith, pure and undefiled, nurtured on the 39 Articles, the 'Anxious Inquirer,' the Shorter Catechism, and the Athanasian Creed—Ugh!" and

the fair speaker shuddered, then rapidly continued—"And as for Christian worship, Mr. Dayrell, why, most of the church-goers of my acquaintance, seem to me to be inspired, in their devotions, considerably more by fear of an avenging deity or a craving for his favour and rewards hereafter—('other-worldliness' as somebody well calls it)—than either by love or adoration. Ah, you think me very naughty, I know, but I fear if the truth were told it would be seen that half of you don't even believe, fear, desire, or worship anything at all while you and the priest are gabbling over your prayers."—(The Dayrell ladies winced a little and smiled faintly at these amiable remarks, but didn't protest; so the lady went on.)—"Now my Christian friends, pray forgive me, as your creed bids you—but it *is* a comfort for once and away to speak the truth. And at all events, I must say, and you won't so much mind my saying, that of real worship such as Byron felt on the Alps by moonlight, or on the lake of Geneva, and as he makes me feel when I read much of his poetry, or such adoration as I have, and perhaps we all have, felt when listening to some grand strains of music—of that real worship most of your church-goers do not seem to have a notion."

"Oh, oh!" from two or three of the listeners.

"Well, not when they are at church at all events, and doing what they call saying their prayers. Now you know it's true, dear Mrs. Dayrell; and yet

they vaunt their religion as if it were the only true worship and devotion under the sun! There! Now may I go further, while I'm about it?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Dayrell, with an air of resignation. "Better 'cleanse your bosom of all this perilous stuff,' once for all."

"Well, then," resumed Stella, "I must confess that the God of the Hebrews, ah and even the Christians' God no less, are hateful to me! 'Glad tidings of great joy,' indeed! a gospel of gladness! What!—Why apart from all the other sad and miserable doctrines of that so-called evangelical faith, how can it be 'good news' for man that such a standard of perfection is offered to us as your gospel contains, and that we have to reach it or 'depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,' where 'the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' . . . It is of course very true that it would be well for us if we *could* all be generous, virtuous and noble, and very sad that we are so base and selfish and vile—but tell me, before you scold me for my heresies, who made us what we are? It is not my will, it is not the will of nine-tenths of the wretches who live in daily defiance of the ten or two commandments, to live as we do. It is not preaching we want. What is the use of setting before us a great example or a perfect rule of life? We cannot follow the one or obey the other. Then these good people, like Mr. Dayrell (senior), talk of walking with God, as if it were not

only a duty but a great privilege and comfort. Yet that always surprises me, for they generally speak of God as if He were constantly 'spying out' their 'ways,' watching to see if they do anything contrary to His commands, and ready to rush down on them with all sorts of heavy penalties, physical and moral, when in their ignorance or frailty they transgress."

My sisters by this time, had considerately found some excuse for taking Miss Grey to the other end of the drawing-room, to look at some rare engravings, I think, which Ellerslie had brought down and left behind him "for the ladies." My mother was evidently thinking she had better stop the discussion, when Stella, who was working extraordinarily hard at a bit of embroidery, without raising her head went on in her excitement:

"How any sane person can find comfort in humble companionship with such a being——Oh, yes, I know, my dear madam, what religious people would say, but look at their most cherished theological tenet—the doctrine of Atonement. Is not that, even on their own showing, simply a heathen device for protecting us from the wrath of an avenging god, and satisfying his justice, by an act of frightful injustice? It may be all true—I can't say. Pagan sinners, all the world over, have had profound faith in it. It may be true. There are many terrible mysteries in the world. But don't ask me to love this fearful god of yours, or wonder

if I'm surprised that a man like your ancestor, Mr. Wilfrid, could find strength or peace in 'walking' with Him."

I had never heard Lady Stella speak out so plainly before. All she had said in former days on these subjects was nothing compared to this dynamite business. I used to think she said such things rather as a flighty bravado, than as the result of serious conviction. But there was no mistaking her meaning now. After a few minutes I just said pretty calmly:

"I rather think the revered ancestor in question had a very different notion of the nature and character of God from what you have imbibed, Lady Stella. To him God was always the kind and loving Friend, the tender compassionate Father, as far as I understood him. According to his view—I don't give it as mine, I have none to give—I should say Christ lived and died not to protect us *from* this Father but to draw us *to* Him—that this was the very purpose for which God sent him into the world." But it was no use. I didn't feel up to saying much more. My mother, by way of a diversion, asked my sisters to give us a little music, and rose to ring the bell for candles. I lay quiet, thinking hard, and didn't hear a note of the music.

I knew that both Lady Stella and my mother and sisters held what would be called somewhat extreme views on all these subjects, but her

vehement protest at this time half-stunned me. It was the more startling, because I felt how much truth there was in what she urged, and I could not answer her. Yet I was sure there *was* another side to the argument, and that a half truth is often a great lie. I threw myself back on the one whole truth I thought I had fully grasped, and making a last attempt, said presently, with pretended composure:

"I cannot follow you now in all you urge, Lady Stella, but let me rest on one declaration you made —that we *must* look up to, worship something. Yet a thing is below a person. How can we look up to, adore it, without infinite degradation? You acknowledge—a mind like yours cannot ignore—the need of worship. Must there not then be, a Person, a Being, infinitely above ourselves, worthy of our adoration—somewhere in the Universe?"

"Mr. Dayrell, I would think life itself not too great a sacrifice to gain an absolute certainty, a knowledge of such a Being."

She said this with more earnestness, almost solemnity, than I had ever known her manifest. Presently she continued in a lighter tone:

"I feel the force of what you say about persons and things. When I was a child I could, and did, love intensely, a wooden darling of a doll—couldn't either love or worship it now. Couldn't even love my pet here, could I?" she said, caressing Jacko, whom she had brought, she said, to amuse me, "if he were not a real person, far above an inanimate

thing! But I admit, oh, Jacko, thou art as yet hardly enough superior to myself to be worshipped."

"Was it not one of the darkest curses of slavery," I observed, stifling a little jealousy of Jacko, "that it degraded man to the condition of a thing—a chattel?"

"But," rejoined Stella, "what, after all, is the difference? What is a person?"

"What you feel and know yourself to be, Lady Stella—a being possessed of Self-consciousness, Reason, Memory, Will. In seeking God, in loving Him, we believe that he is like ourselves, or rather that in these respects we are like Him—made in His image. You love that singularly-favoured being on your knee more than the wooden doll just so far as you have emerged from the rudimentary condition of childhood and savage life, and in proportion as he resembles *you* (save the mark!) mentally and morally more than your doll did. But a higher development of your nature might lead to your loving Man, and a higher still to loving God."

"Ah, my dear preceptor," replied the lady, "if you only would and could effect that development I should almost worship——" "you," she was going to say, but paused; then added, "Oh, that it were possible! But unfortunately I have read 'Mills' Logic,' and 'Bain's Philosophy,' Herbert Spencer, Tyndall, Huxley and Mansell, and I *know* that it is impossible we should have that knowledge this side the grave, whatever may be revealed on the other.

I do not, no, not for a moment, deny there may be such a Being. But I cannot, none can, know Him even if there be one. Therefore I cannot believe in, cannot worship Him. I will, I do, indeed I do, worship Something of ineffable Beauty and Grandeur. I do look up to—I know not what. Beyond this I cannot go. Pray, do not urge me——"

She paused abruptly and covered her face with her hands. Her cousin, to whom what she had heard of this conversation seemed to be not a little painful, now came forward saying that their carriage had come, and so ended our discussion. We all took leave of one another almost in silence. Not too soon, for I was in a tempest—and a temper.

I dreamed that night I was wandering in a charming wood, carpeted with flowers, alone with Stella, our hearts full of love and gladness, when suddenly a black sullen pool of water, and then a dark yawning gulf opened between us, and we were parted in anguish. I woke and believed my dream was true. But, thank God, it hadn't come to anything like that yet. The agitation of the previous evening passed away with the morning cheerfulness, and when we all met next time, Stella, by her gentle, sympathetic manner, seemed so desirous of effacing any painful impression on my mind that I was profoundly grateful to her for having troubled it a night or two before. She brought her work near my couch, and seemed bent on arranging both my thoughts and my pillows more comfortably. While

doing so she just whispered, "Will you forgive me?" adding, with a pretty, playful smile, "And convert me." Then, still in a low tone, "Indeed, I have been thinking much of what you said about a Person being higher than a thing, and that worship of aught that is lower, meaner than ourselves *is* degrading. Thank you, Mr. Dayrell, for that argument, at all events."

I suppose I looked very happy as she said this and she went on, a bright up-looking expression on her face:

"There's a passage of wonderful truth and depth, from the believing point of view, in one of the books in your Bible which has often haunted me, 'But without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.' No doubt, no doubt. The very basis of all religion is an assured belief, I admit—first, in the existence of a Personal God, and then in His caring for us—for each of us individually, that is. But it is just that faith which I haven't got—never shall get. I cannot believe in what is so utterly beyond my reach," and the old dreary look which had more than once pained me came over her. "But," she whispered, "don't let us quarrel about it. I must love and worship. Help me."

I answered by pressing her hand, which she did not immediately withdraw, and for the moment I undutifully wished my mother and sisters were abid-

ing in the City of Palms on the banks of the Jordan. Then we had a reading aloud from the newspaper, a little chit-chat and general literary talk till it was time to part.

The following evening, however, those excellent ladies did go—not to Jericho, but to a dinner party about three or four miles away, which would have answered my desires quite as well only that they were able to return so much sooner than they could have done from the Promised Land. It was the first evening, I believe, my mother and sisters had been out together since my accident; but Lady Stella and her cousin had promised to come in and keep me company.

* * * * *

The next two or three pages of Wilfrid Dayrell's journal are so blurred, blotted, and interlined that much was nearly, and some quite, illegible. What appears to have taken place, when thrown into the due narrative, picturesque form, was this.

After tea, the three young folks were conversing about London gaieties, and Dayrell had been speaking with considerable vivacity, for him, of the charms of London concerts, and especially of the opera, when anything thoroughly good appeared in that line.

"Are you really fond, then, of good music?" asked Stella.

"Am I?" replied the sufferer, turning on his couch. "Rather. I have loved it more intensely than any other created thing I know of—that is to

say, the music I love at all, if that's what you call good music. But for a long time," he added in a lowered voice, "I couldn't bear any music."

"Shall I play or sing to you a little now? But I don't know that you will care for my music, I have scarcely practised at all for an age."

"I have never heard any singing or playing," he answered, "which I liked so well. But I haven't dared to ask you."

She sat down to the piano and played first a piece from a Sonata of Beethoven's, for which he thanked her and said he liked it, but he was evidently not enthusiastic. Then she played an old and beautiful air with variations, called "Huntsman, rest," which she declared ought to suit his condition exactly, and then wandered off into those exquisite variations by Thalberg on "Home, sweet Home," and the wounded huntsman lay entranced in ecstasy. When Lady Stella had finished he could scarcely speak his thanks; but as she came back to her little work-table by his couch she saw how much he was affected as he put out his wasted hand in token of his thanks. After a few moments he said softly:

"I was thinking while you were playing that there would be a home for some of us, some day, out among yonder stars, and how pleasant it would be there to rest from all this weary pain, and perhaps begin a new and brighter life—very sweet and blessed if only the beloved ones of earth were with me there." But though the words seemed to be

looking forward in hope, the tone in which they were uttered was so sad and weary that they went to his listener's heart with an aching pain. He had not let go her hand, and now he felt a hot tear dropping on it.

* * * * *

Lady Stella soon rose and went to the piano again, saying:

"We mustn't let you be excited, or we shall get into disgrace when your mother returns. I learnt a little song some time since which I thought might one day please you, for it seems to refer to a touching episode in your grandfather's memoirs, which I have read more than once and again, when his soul wandered upwards among those far-off stars, of which you spoke just now."

Then she began singing—

"Can I forget that night in June,
Upon the Danube river—— "

When she had concluded, she said apologetically: "It's dreadfully sentimental, I know, but—— "

"But very, very sweet," murmured the young man, and then added, "You don't mind a *little* sentiment, then?"

"Not if it pleases you or sends you to sleep," replied the lady, with that fascinating smile free from all cynicism, seldom seen on her face, but, once seen, never forgotten. As she resumed her seat, she bent again towards him, saying:

"I am so glad I can give you a little enjoy-

ment. May I come and play or sing to you sometimes, now I know what kind of music you like. But not if my poor trumpeting makes you sad."

"If it does, believe me, dear Lady Stella, it also makes me glad. And the sadness is good for my complaint," he added, as a wan smile stole over his face. But she knew that he meant in some way it was good for his spiritual life, and she shrank from approaching that region of his thought, for it bordered on all the religious emotions and speculations in which she could not share — from which she felt—how painfully?—repelled.

When his mother came home that night, and went up on tip-toe to see if her son was sleeping quietly, she found his pulse so high and his cheeks so flushed, that she said his amateur nurses had managed very badly, and mentally vowed they should not be allowed to wait on him by themselves again.

During the interchange of views between Lady Stella and young Dayrell above recorded, it was plain that though cousin Frances kindly and discreetly tried to efface herself, she was in a great fidget, and this probably had a sobering effect on the other two romantic young people. Hence Dayrell found that banishment of his own relatives was not sufficient for his satisfaction, and included Stella's cousin also in his prayer referring to the East.

Miss Grey did indeed depart, as soon as their

carriage was announced; but unfortunately Lady Stella had to go with her, leaving the descendant of the Oriel Bacchanal in a very melancholy and depressed condition, both of mind and body, quite unworthy of his ancestry. Hence "illæ lachrymæ" when Mrs. Dayrell returned.

For the remainder of this narrative, where it has not been supplied from Wilfrid Dayrell's journal, Lady Stella's diary and memory are chiefly responsible.

It appears then that Miss Frances did not unburthen her mind that night, and her cousin was silent as the grave. But the next morning she spoke out—beginning:

"Stella!"

The young lady addressed was in a reverie, her thoughts were not at Hurstleigh Manor at all, but by the couch of a crippled invalid, a few miles further off.

"Stella! will you attend? I have something important to remark."

"Say on, ingenuous child," replied her cousin, bringing back her thoughts, but evidently listening with languid interest.

"I think, Stella, you are much to blame——"

"Not possible," replied the accused carelessly.

"In flirting with that poor young man in the unblushing manner you have lately done."

"I think I *have* heard that remark from you before," replied the criminal, still with indifference, not to say contempt.

"And will again," said Frances, warming to her work, "and a good deal worse, if you don't mend your ways."

"What a fearful fate awaits me," murmured Stella.

"And if that has no effect," continued Frances, "I shall send for my mother and go back to my kith and kin, leaving you alone to all your wickedness and subsequent remorse. I won't stay here to witness and condone, or sanction, your cruel behaviour."

"Ah; now you do frighten me a little bit. Don't go, or it will be so dull and lonely that I shall certainly marry the first fool that makes me an offer. Even now you see the country is so dull that I am obliged to relieve its tedium by a little harmless '*affaire de cœur*,' which, of course, the other party knows is merely a bit of fun—'*pour passer le temps!*'"

"Fie on you, Stella! You *know* he thinks more of it than that—he may be a hopeless nincompoop and crippled for life, perhaps doomed to an early death, and marriage, of course, can never be for him. But you are tearing out his heart, and digging for him an early grave. . . ."

Stella did not immediately reply, but looked out of the window, then answered with a well-concealed effort.

"Dear me; why only the other day you described me as a victim—a lovely humming bird, was it

not? fascinated by a deadly but beautiful rattlesnake. Well, the young gentleman does rattle on, I allow, and fast enough to give sufficient warning."

"Let *me* give you warning, dear foolish, headstrong yet beloved wretch!" exclaimed Frances. "And if nothing else will have any effect, what do you think your father will have to say in this matter? Ask yourself seriously what Sir Michael would think about it if he knew all that is going on between you two Bedlamites."

For a moment Stella changed colour, and did look very serious indeed. Recovering herself quickly, she replied, coldly at first:

"Much-esteemed cousin, wisest of thy sex, I came of age just a year ago, and your threats

> "'. . . . pass by me like the idle wind,
> Which I regard not.'

Possibly you have also heard that quotation before." Then suddenly changing her tone she exclaimed: "But, my dear little coz, I'll make believe, very much indeed, that all you say is Bible-truth, which, after all, is not going very far, and I'll be as discreet as — Juliet's nurse; which is saying a good deal, and ought to content you. But, oh! you know I do love intellect, and he *is* so clever even in his present dilapidated condition!" She kissed her cousin demonstratively, and walked into the garden—thoughtfully, perhaps penitently—saying to herself, "But he hasn't quite won his spurs yet in intellectual fields. That little

volume of poems, nevertheless, was full of beauty and power. And then — that picture, 'In the gloaming!' . . . And oh! how profoundly interesting all he has been saying and reading about his grandfather, and all that the old man said when he was a young man about that glorious poet, Byron! of whom I wish I knew a little more. Would I had been born in the days of chivalry! in the ages of faith, or in the Renaissance; for poets and philosophers, as well as *preux chevaliers*, swarmed as abundantly then as frogs in the time of Pharaoh, and wooed and worshipped loyally the weaker sex. . . . Heigho! Life now is either frivolous or sad."

But whatever blame might attach to the lady, surely it was in no spirit of chivalry that young Dayrell was now allowing himself to cherish his ardent passion. Had he not once felt that the mere fact of her being an heiress was a huge obstacle in the way of his suit, even when he was full of health and buoyant life? How could he now reconcile with any standard of Duty or Chivalry, or with anything but the merest selfishness, his behaviour in trying to interest this bewitching girl in his thoughts, in himself? He never tried to reconcile it. He knew their mutual friendship was doing him a world of good. The fact may have been, also, that he had been rendered utterly reckless by the blow that had fallen on him, and when people become reckless they necessarily also become selfish.

So as he gained freedom from bodily suffering, he surrendered himself, unthinking of results, uncaring for consequences, to the only alleviation of his often very grievous pain of heart and mind, yielded to his intense desire so long and ardently cherished for Stella's love and sympathy, and silenced all stings of conscience or remorse.



CHAPTER IX.

But that peerless maiden did not go to play or sing to Wilfrid Dayrell, either the next day or the day after; and when they were all once again assembled at his mother's her manner was stately and reserved. He felt the chill that had unmistakably come over the ladies from Hurstleigh. His mother had been reading aloud bits from the newspaper, and looking up, remarked:

"How wonderfully cold it is for April, considering, too, that the wind is west."

"Yes," replied one of her daughters, "but you see that is accounted for now. Great icebergs reported in the Atlantic, you read a minute ago."

"I was sure there was something of that sort," said Dayrell, looking grimly towards Lady Stella, and then (drawing himself proudly into his shell) added "Yet the west wind ought always to be genial and refreshing—would be, I suppose, but for the icebergs."

The lady could not quite conceal a faint blush under Dayrell's scrutinizing gaze; and to turn the current, said in a sprightly tone:

"Have you nothing more to read to us, Mr.

Dayrell, about your ancestor's researches concerning that tumultuous Titan—Carlyle's *bête noire*—the 'English Lord'?"

"Yes, I have found the account of Mr. Dayrell's visit to him at Ravenna."

"Oh, I *am* glad," exclaimed Stella. "Of all things I wanted to hear what you could tell us about that visit. Does he write it himself?"

"No. It is in the handwriting of the same Oxford friend, Mr. Rivers, who wrote out that lecture on Byron, and to whom, I suppose, Mr. Dayrell at some time or other told the recollections embodied in the memoir. Shall I read?"

Chorus of assent.

"Here it is then."

"Recollections of a journey to Ravenna in the year 1819, preserved and transmitted by a friend of the traveller."

After narrating his journey through Switzerland and across the Alps, Dayrell describes his emotions on entering Italy and realizing the passionate dream of his boyhood and youth, while still under the witching spell of Lord Byron's poetry and the glamour of his character. He had to wander about the glorious historic scenes of Italian vicissitudes for a few weeks, until the day which the poet had named for receiving him. But at length the time arrived when he was to present himself at the Byronic shrine.

So on to Ravenna now sped our hero; seldom a day passing without coming on scenes made memorable by their past history or enchanting by their present beauty, and where, had he not been possessed by one overpowering desire, he would have gladly lingered for days or weeks. Whenever he could get decent riding horses he used them in preference to the "carozza," but at Rossena a little village not many miles from Parma, he was delayed a couple of days from inability to get either. To work off his restlessness Charlie started off on foot, as soon as he had got some refreshment at the humble *osteria*, to explore the wild and beautiful hills and woods among which it was placed. As he roamed through a rather more rugged and thickly wooded district than any previously reached, and was forcing his way through some brushwood, he suddenly found a musket-barrel at his chest and another pointed at his head, while two rather ferocious-looking peasants demanded in hoarse and threatening tones what he wanted there. The inquiry relieved him of the apprehension that he was about to be robbed and murdered by bandits. Fortunately he had learnt just enough Italian to explain. The words, "Amico mio, sono Inglese," had a magical effect, and his statement respecting his present circumstances was received with the greatest courtesy. More peasants, all armed, soon came up. He was conducted to an open space surrounded by trees and brushwood where at least

fifty picturesque fierce-looking fellows were drilling, or reclining on the turf. Dayrell had walked into the centre of a revolutionary band of Italian Carbonari, and was welcomed as if he had brought them tidings that one of their domestic or foreign oppressors had been assassinated. The adventure was delightful to Charlie in a high degree. He soon made himself thoroughly at home with them, and of course they were delighted with him, particularly when they found he could speak their language. He sat talking with one or more of the leaders till dusk, and then partook of their humble meal, while they never wearied of pouring forth the melancholy tale of all the cruel oppression from which they were suffering, and asking his intercession on their behalf with his countrymen wherever, in Italy or the Universe, they might be found. Charlie was lavish of sympathy and had difficulty in restraining himself from equal prodigality of promises and cash; for he knew how ardently Lord Byron had interested himself in this oppressed nation; and even in his rapid journey he had already seen and heard enough of the degradation and sufferings inflicted on the Italian people by Austrian conquerors and their own rulers, to be filled with an ardent desire to see them emancipated from their double yoke. But until that evening he had heard little of the efforts and preparations these "hereditary bondsmen" were making, "themselves," to "strike the blow" for

their national deliverance. It was a stirring and memorable scene for Dayrell—one of those epochs in his life which usher a man into a wholly new world, and perhaps, by their practical as well as rousing character, colour his whole future life. Here he was face to face, for the first time in his life, with that life and death struggle between Law and Liberty, Freedom and Tyranny, of which in its milder romantic and metaphorical forms he had been engaged in, and dreaming of, all his life. He had worshipped Freedom—passionately craved for it in almost every available or impossible form since he had left the cradle—longed to transgress all bounds, and to strike off the captive's chains wherever he beheld them. Don Quixote's experience with the galley-slaves had indeed taught him a lesson, which, like other lessons conveyed by that immortal satire, struck him at first with a kind of sharp pain. It was long indeed before he could fully harmonize the undeniable truth of those teachings with his own enthusiasm and romantic dreams. But he did at last; and was a much wiser man in consequence of reading the history of the Knight of La Mancha and his Squire. Before leaving his revolutionary friends Charlie had won all their hearts; and while abstaining from any vociferous salutation as he departed, for fear of attracting attention, they wrung his hand, and looked in his face, with an earnestness which augured well for their conduct when the time migh

come for proving them. He emptied his purse into the hand of their leader "for the good of the cause" and departed amid a shower of "*Bene! Bene!*" and "*Addio, Signor!*" under the escort of two of the band; for it was now too dark to find his way, unaided, back to the inn.

This little rencontre subsequently turned out greatly to his advantage for the main object he then had in view.

Throughout a sultry day Charlie was told every hour that over the next hill he would be able to see the celebrated woods and towers of Ravenna. At last he reached the spot whence they could be really seen. As he stood for a moment gazing on the distant scene, crowded with ancient and modern memories, he said his heart beat so violently that he almost gasped for breath. Pulling himself together, he was soon rattling down an incline, threading the fringe of the dusky pine-woods, till his driver halted before the portico of an imposing but too venerable edifice, once a palace, now an hotel.

Bath, dinner, toilet despatched, Charlie sought the shrine.

"His lordship is out riding at present, Signor. He generally goes out in the evening. He would rather see you later in the evening, I think, Signor. I believe he is expecting you."

Charlie was immensely relieved by this last sentence of his lordship's valet, and inwardly offered thanks to Mr. Hobhouse, who, it appears, had given

him an introduction when Charlie called on him in London.

When he again mounted the steps of the Palazza Guiccioli, with a palpitating heart and full of a nameless anxiety, he was not a little startled, yet considerably relieved, by hearing a musical voice exclaiming in rather a jovial tone:

"Oh ho! Here comes our young Oxford Bacchanal!"

Then the noble poet appeared on the scene, and, holding out his hand with a curious mixture of frankness and shyness, gave the visitor a cordial welcome. There was something in the whole tone and manner of his reception which at once put Charlie quite at his ease, and somewhat disenchanted him,—as if a lowly worshipper at the shrine of the Ephesian Diana had suddenly beheld the goddess descend from her pedestal and come dancing towards him.

"Glad to see you, young gentleman. Hobhouse told me you were coming. I'm all alone here. Where are you staying? At the hotel! Oh, gammon! don't stow yourself in that wretched hole. Come up here. I'll send for your traps. I'm d—d busy just now, and keep queer hours; but if you'll put up with my ways and keep me company for a few days, it will be a real pleasure. . . ."

And so he rattled on, till Charlie began to doubt if he were really awake, or only lost in a strange, delightful, and curiously perplexing dream. He

soon found it was decidedly a charming reality. The fact was that Byron had been prepared to take to young Dayrell not only in consequence of all that Hobhouse had communicated, and his own natural kindness of heart, especially towards his own countrymen if they were gentlemen, but also by what Lord Clare had written to him after that visit to Oxford, when Charlie was still "in honour borne aloft" for his performance in "The Bacchanals." So, after a few inquiries about his guest's experiences of travel, the answers to which he heard without much attention, he dashed into the subject which was much more interesting both to himself and to Dayrell.

Dinner was served at 8 p.m., and when the meal was over, Lord Byron began at once on the Dionysiac myth and the Greek drama. He seemed to know little or nothing about the play, but the legend had evidently once fascinated him, and he was delighted when he found Dayrell had got both the play and Mr. Milman's translation of the choruses in his portmanteau. He referred more than once with a kind of boyish delight to Charlie's endeavour to get live snakes wherewith to adorn his girdle and head-gear, as leader of the chorus, and stigmatized the manager and actors as "d—d fools" for objecting to their introduction.

"I tell you what, O Coryphæus! *I* won't object to them if you'll dress up here and recite the 'Chorus.' There are lots of snakes in these woods,

and we could have a splendid turn-out. I won't guarantee they are all harmless, but that don't matter!"

He kept up the conversation till long after midnight, by which time, in spite of the extraordinary charm of being in Lord Byron's presence, poor Charlie, after a long day's travel, could hardly keep his eyes open, and was compassionately dismissed to bed.

"Breakfast when you please," said his host. "I don't take mine till 2 p.m."

Percy Bysshe Shelley, writing to a friend after spending some days with Byron, says: "He is cheerful, frank and witty. His more serious conversation is a sort of intoxication; men are held by it as by a spell." What, then, must it have been to women capable of appreciating it? But although Charlie was not immediately admitted to that inner sanctum, his happiness may easily be imagined. For, as Shelley truly said, no words could describe the charm of the poet's conversation and manners when he was really pleased with a guest; while any one who knew the profound sympathy which Dayrell felt for all that was beautiful and best in Byron's deeper nature, could understand what the happiness must have been of finding himself ere long admitted to share in the poet's inner life. It is well known now that Byron habitually wore an outside shell of cynicism or levity to protect the marvellously sensitive, poetic, loving, and sentimental nature which

constituted the essence of his moral being. True, the shell was part of himself—grew from a very decided and powerful element in his intellectual nature, without which he would have been a far weaker man; but probably nothing gave him truer happiness than to find himself in a companionship where he could safely come out of that shell and give his higher instincts free play.

The combination in Dayrell of a marvellous amount of enthusiasm for all in which Byron most delighted, with manly simplicity and the utter absence of anything approaching to egotism, vanity, or cant—all which speedily became apparent to his host—opened Byron's generous heart unreservedly. It was the style of character in which he most delighted; and the first sign of his satisfaction was his dispensing with much of that badinage and flighty banter, in more modern days called "chaff," which he was accustomed to bestow on his friends. When this change took place, Charlie saw that his host had previously been acting a part, or say, rather, had been concealing his real self beneath a superficial manner. But the next sign of perfect confidence was that he let the profound melancholy, which formed so sad and striking a characteristic of his inner self, have its way. He seemed to feel instinctively that in Dayrell's hearty manly healthfulness of spirit there was some healing balm, however brief its influence might be, for his own sick soul. And then he also saw

that Dayrell was not a fellow familiarity with whom would breed license; that he was not only a thorough gentleman, of which, indeed, his birth and University training gave full assurance, but that he was possessed by a spirit of profound reverence for himself. His manner, even when most at his ease with the noble poet, was always respectful, and yet self-respecting; and so far unequivocally deferential as was consistent with the status of a gentleman admitted to familiar converse with one whom he knew to be his superior in rank and years, and immeasurably in intellect. This was a great point in his favour. For though Byron was fairly free from vulgar pride of birth, he was rather sensitive as to the recognition of his rank, which was thought more of in those times than, perhaps, in these days; and while delighting in perfect social freedom with intimate friends, he shrank with sensitive disgust from any approach to unauthorized and intrusive familiarity.

But Charlie did not find that he could get much talk with his host on the topics which interested him most deeply, and of which he had spoken so earnestly in his lecture in the Common Room at Oriel. Of course he approached the subject of the poet's works with great caution, and Byron always answered any remarks or questions he ventured to propound, with kindness, and for a little time, perhaps, with interest. But he

soon saw that the poet was getting bored, and that he must give it up. One evening Byron asked him a number of questions about himself, his parents, and home; seemed intensely interested in the way Charlie spoke of his mother and of all that she had been to him; broke off the conversation first with a sigh that seemed as if he were giving up the ghost, and saying, "Happy fellow! Would to God that I——" and then finished off with an oath, as if to conceal the feelings of which he was ashamed.

Charlie's daring experiences in an open boat during the storm off Naples greatly interested Lord Byron, and led him to recount some of his own adventures in that line, all which led up to descriptions of various feats in swimming, to "Boatswain" the Newfoundland, "Max" the retriever, &c. But the great success in these talks for Charlie was when he mentioned, with all his enthusiasm for liberty, his rencontre with the Carbonari near Rossena. Byron's face lighted up with extraordinary animation as he asked all particulars, and then talked for hours on the miserable condition of Italy under her tyrants, and of the efforts then being made, which he was strenuously aiding, to throw off that intolerable yoke. All this drew the two men closer together than any of their previous intercourse, and Dayrell felt as if he had actually made or found a friend in the higher sense of the term, where he had expected only to behold

an Olympian deity, indifferent, careless, and have to worship at a respectful distance.

He knew but little about, and dwelt less upon, what lay behind and beneath that glorious demi-god's nobler nature and higher life. And Byron had no desire to expose that side of his heart and life whereof he was unutterably weary and ashamed. If ever a man went down into the depths of vice, loathing his own baseness, struggling desperately against the overwhelming force of the fiery passions that have too often swayed the heart of man, it was Dayrell's kindly host in the Palazza Guiccioli. Nothing is now plainer than that the sins and excesses into which Byron was again and again betrayed were not only opposed to, resisted by, his better self with a strength of which feebler natures can form no conception, but that his degradation and vice were abhorrent to his very soul.

When Charles Dayrell visited him, that intensely ardent craving to love and to be loved again, which, as Dayrell urged in his lecture, was by far the strongest element in his nature, had at last found an object on which it could rest in happy thankfulness and peace, a love which filled and satisfied his soul, "as far," thought Charlie, "as any human soul can be satisfied with only human love."

But even now the fatal poison-drop still was in his cup. The Countess Guiccioli, then residing at a villa belonging to her brother Count Gamba (about fifteen

miles from Ravenna), so worthy, so eminently fitted in all other respects, to be the object of all his passionate devotion, was already married. True, that marriage was itself a grievous sin. For she had been taken from a convent when little more than a child, married to a man of sixty who appears to have been of morose disposition, utterly unfitted to secure or retain the affection of a young susceptible girl with the fervent nature of a Juliet in all its beauty and passion. True, also that if ever there was a man to whom a woman would feel powerfully attracted it was this same poet who craved so ardently himself for love and who could love so ardently in return —true also that in the land where he was born it was an age of gross licentiousness, while in the lady's native land among the upper classes the marriage tie was little more than a name. Nevertheless the mournful fact remains. And no amount of love and honour for the poet, no amount of palliation and excuse for his conduct can erase it from the Recording Angel's book—unless far other tears than the angel's can at length remove the stain.

Dayrell, long before he left England, had of course heard stories about the great poet which gave him intense pain; but he had learnt to believe less than half what the world said in such cases, and to know that one story is good till another is told. With the natural instinct of a pure and self-respecting mind he had avoided as much as possible listening to any of this gossip, greatly disliking the whole subject, and

not considering it either his duty, or his business to inquire into Lord Byron's private life. He had no commission to sit in judgment on his character and conduct, except in that general way described in his lecture at Oriel. Hence he had never felt repelled from his idol, as unquestionably he would have been had he known all the facts which have since been made fully known.

Lord Byron on the other hand soon saw that "young Dayrell Dithyrambus," as he called him, was not one of those rakish young fellows whom his soul loathed all the more because he had so often been drawn against his will into their ways; and hence all the better part of his nature and character felt free to open out genially at times towards his young countryman. He asked him on one occasion all about his early life, delighted in hearing about the New Forest and the gypsies, rattled away about Sherwood Forest and the poor Nottingham frame-breakers and Luddites, received with pretended nonchalance but real gratification Charlie's earnest and heartfelt thanks for the generous efforts he had made both in Parliament and out of it, on their behalf, brought back the conversation to Dayrell's antecedents, and at last with a curiously fascinating shyness and merry twinkle of his dark eyes asked him if he had ever been in love. The change which came over the poor youth's face and manner told its own tale, as with an effort at composure he answered in a low tone:

"Yes—but——"

"I see," said his host, taking Dayrell's hand for an instant, in a sympathetic and melancholy fashion. "The old story. But she may yet——"

"No—married."

"God help you!" cried the poet, throwing away the hand he had taken and rising from his seat. "I'm sorry for you, Dayrell," he said, pacing the room in agitation. "I am—by ——. But, Dayrell —be warned!—don't—for the love of Heaven, *don't* let that disappointment drive you into the hog-styes—or into any other infernal devilries—hasty marriage among them, the most accursed of all. You've not yet gone to the devil, I can see that. Keep out of his claws and some day you'll meet with the true goddess, and then you'll love her with all your heart, and have no damnable let or hindrance to make you cut your throat in sheer disgust and despair. Though, remember, if it ever comes to that, pistols are better than steel—quicker and cleaner—and they can't sew up the wound. . . . But how about friends—you must have had a friend or two at Oxford you valued —loved."

"Aye, indeed," answered Dayrell thoughtfully.

"Well and isn't a true friend—one whom you love and who is worthy of it—is he not worth all the women that ever ensnared their slaves?"

"My friend was one of the truest, noblest, that ever—— But I can't have much of his company now. He's got better friends than myself now—somewhere."

"Gone to glory?"

Dayrell nodded.

"Poor devil," muttered Byron. "That's the way—Matthews and Wingfield. Sorry for you, Dayrell—I am, by Jove."

When they next met after this conversation Byron's manner was even kinder and franker than previously, and he was willing to talk on the subjects wherein Charlie was most interested, even about Childe Harold and the Doge of Venice among the rest, though he evidently had a dislike to dwelling on Venetian memories. Once they got on the subject of Greece and then Byron showed extraordinary interest in the hapless state of that noble country and its oppressed race. "I would give all my fortune, and my life too, to deliver those fellows from the infernal tyranny of the Turks. Nobody who has not travelled there can form any conception of what a brutal degrading oppression the Greeks have been living under for these last four hundred years. And they are such a noble—aye, glorious race still, in spite of those centuries of slavery."

"Can nothing be done to help their emancipation?" asked Dayrell.

"Don't know — there might," replied Byron musing. "But my hands are full here at present. We must first see what can be done to help these unhappy devils of Italians, who are suffering almost as much. There's an address," said he, throwing a paper on the table, "which I've

just written to the Liberal Government which they have set up in Naples, if you like to look at it," the style whereof may be guessed from a letter written by Lord Byron at the same time, in which he said, among other things, "It is no great matter, supposing that Italy could be liberated, who or what is sacrificed. It is a grand object—the very poetry of politics. Only think of a free Italy!" When he saw the sympathy his words excited in Dayrell, he added vehemently, "Aye, aye, my boy, a man ought to do more for society than write verses. I mean to throw myself, heart and soul, into this coming insurrection?" And he did. "Whatever I can do," he wrote, "by money, means, or person, I will venture freely for their freedom." And this, let it be remembered, was not when he was in the depths of wretchedness, but happier, more at peace, probably, than he had ever been since the death of Thyrza.

When Byron saw the enthusiastic response Charlie made to this kind of appeal, he told him all the plans and hopes of the conspirators, and said how much he should like to introduce him to Count Gamba, "a true patriot," and his sister, the Countess Guiccioli.

When his young friend was retiring for the night, Byron said in a shy, rather dreamy, sort of way, "Of course, I've heard of your father, but—excuse me, is that admirable mother of yours living?"

"Thank God, yes."

"And thank Him beyond all conceivable and imaginable bounds that He has given you such a mother as Hobhouse told me, and you have shown me, yours must be."

A day later Dayrell wrote in his journal the following passage, which, like other portions of that diary, seems to have been addressed to the Oriel friend he had so recently lost, Archer Hepburn: . . . But to-day I have had another conversation with him, which I thought at first would end very painfully, and that I should have had to clear out from here at once. . . He had been speaking of these unhappy Italians, and the efforts they were making to regain their long-lost liberties, but which he feared would be fruitless, and then he went off into one of the saddest wails of melancholy despair about everybody and everything, himself especially, I ever heard from human lips. I ventured to say, "But, my dear lord, is it not an infinite privilege both for them, and still more for you, to have this work of emancipation on your hands? Surely it is not our success so much as our faithfulness that is of importance?" He took my hand with such a look, actually of gratitude, and so touching —I can't describe it—it almost made me tremble. But then I felt so very thankful I had been able to know a little more of this marvellous being—perhaps to give him a moment's comfort in the midst of all his half-throttling troubles and toils. . . . Soon after, when he had gone for his usual ride

(armed with pistols and a stiletto), and I was wandering about through the pine-woods towards the sea, whom should I meet but our old friend, Carl Rosenheim, who was out on his summer vacation, and had come to Ravenna with communications for Lord Byron from the Secret Committee at Naples. He also wanted to get a few notes about Byron, his doings and 'beings,' for an article he told me he was writing on 'Italy, Byron, the Carbonari,' &c., for 'The Gentleman's Magazine.' When he found where I was staying he wanted to know a great deal more than of course I felt at liberty to tell him; but he told me, also, a great deal more than I cared to hear or believe. Yet the evidence was only too clear as to much of what he said, knowing what I did previously, and having read portions of his writings, which I confess had filled me with contempt and disgust. And, oh, my dear old friend, how can I tell you, you who are dwelling in realms of purity and light, where 'nothing that defileth' ever comes, how very, very sad these facts regarding Lord Byron's past life, which are continually coming out, and now are almost public property, seem to your idolatrous friend! I scarcely know which makes one most miserable, his—but no, I need not, must not, write of such things to you. I may, however, tell you, and it is a great relief to tell you (for there is no other living soul whom I could tell) what passed afterwards. After dinner he reverted to the subject of Italian emancipation; told

me he had joined the Carbonari, supplied them with arms, and promised any of them, who might be hunted down, a refuge in his house, 'which,' said he, with great animation, and with a kind of grim combative joy I had once or twice noticed before, "I am prepared to turn into a fortress, if need be." Then he asked if I were ready to shoulder a musket and pike beside the Carbonari. I said, "Only too gladly, as far as I alone was concerned—shouldn't I like it! Fancy fighting for Italian freedom!" But I could not help adding that I feared my father and mother would be broken-hearted if I flung away my life out here. And then I spoke of the longing I had to emancipate my own countrymen from what I knew was their miserable bondage, and that, perhaps, English peasants, shopmen, or clerks, had a prior claim on me; nevertheless, I should feel it an infinite privilege to fight, and even die by *his* side in the cause of Italian liberty.

Then that wonderful look of melancholy affection came again on his face as he glanced at me, only more sweet and touching than ever. . . . Well, after that he drew me on to speak of my notions about Bacchanalian freedom and joy, and got immensely interested in the choruses of 'The Bacchanals,' spoke very highly of Milman's poetic powers, and then, all of a sudden, he burst out into a mocking laugh, and exclaimed, "Why, Dayrell, I was acting Dionysus and his Mænads to the very life in Venice a year ago! Ha, ha, ha!" Then all

that Rosenheim had been telling me, all I had heard elsewhere, came over me like a dark thunder-cloud. I could not speak—I could only look at him. . . . He read my thoughts in an instant . . . turned away for a moment, swung himself round again and said, half fiercely, half scornfully, "Dayrell, you're a prude." . . . I answered back, "May be; but you have been false" (he started as if a serpent had stung him, and glared at me as if going to strike or shoot me. I wasn't much alarmed, and went on)—"false to your true self—false to all you most honour and love, when you were doing and writing what I needn't talk about—aye, and you are false to yourself—forgive me—when you call me a prude for hating it. Forgive me; I didn't mean to say all this, but——"

As I spoke, the angry scowl died away from his forehead, and all his usual melancholy came back as he said: "Forgive you! Better forgive me. But you've had a mother worthy of your love and honour." Then he bounced up from his seat, and walked up and down a minute, and said half to himself—"Yes, yes; now I understand all those King-Arthurish notions of yours, and where you got them. Oh, my God, if I could only begin life over again!"

Then I ventured to speak up again:

"Lord Byron, you've done a grand work for Englishmen and for millions beside, teaching them" (and here I think *I* flamed up a bit too) "to love

the Beautiful in Nature and Art, to long for Freedom, to believe in Love and Joy, as no other Englishman has ever yet done. Some of us know this now; more will know it by-and-bye; none but a very noble nature could have done what you have done. That's why one is so very, very sorry for . . ."

"I know, I know," he said, kindly, seeing I was in a tempest; "but 'false' is an ugly word."

"Did you not," I asked, "once destroy the whole edition of your first-born because the Rev. John Becher told you one poem in it was licentious?" (He nodded.) "That was nobly done."

"Aye, aye," he answered. "But it's too late now to try and destroy all my naughty poems. It never can now be said of me that 'he has writ no line which—

"'Dying he could wish to blot.'"

"Ah, well," I added, "you know as well as—infinitely better than—I do, that you have gone into all these . . ."

I paused again, and he broke out:

". . . These infernal devilries——"

"Against your will," I continued; and he exclaimed:

"D'ye think I need to be told that! Not I. I hate it all as damnably as you do! Haven't I loathed my very self for these things, and only not blown out my brains because I wanted to redeem the past after each fresh fall! Why more than once I've cut the whole beastly pack in Venice in

the very height of their spree, and been rowed over the lagunes till morning, and the coast was clear! And haven't I been all my life looking and longing for one . . . Don't believe, never believe, Dayrell, that I don't *know* there's something better and higher to live for than what the world and its fools falsely swear is all I care about . . ."

And then I think tears were in his eyes.

"Dear Lord Byron," I said, and I suppose my voice was a little shaky, "no one has helped us more, in this age, to believe in some higher and happier—yes and purer—life than yourself."

He looked at me, gratefully, I thought, for a moment, and said:

"God grant it. . . . But how the devil, I want to know, *is* a fellow to go straight in such a d——d world as this?"

"Only by higher help and guidance," and then I seemed to see those fountains of the great deep in his religious nature, in which I had always believed, broken up, and I knew I had not been mistaken in all I had said about him at Oriel.

"But how," he exclaimed, "how, are we to get that help? Many, many a time I've cried out into the dark void and groped, and prayed, but no answer came. . . ."

"Is not all that you have thought and written so splendidly, inspired by One above? Was not that the answer?"

"Aye; but what's the use," he exclaimed angrily, "of inspiration, or even of momentary help, or any of your other sanctified nostrums, if the God deserts you the next hour and leaves you to the beasts of prey that rend and tear you?"

"How can He continue," I answered, "to dwell with you when you let unclean beasts and foul spirits dwell there too? Must not our own will be on His side—our own resolute ban be placed on the entrance of what is vile before we can expect Him to continue to abide in our soul? Would one you love and honour with all your heart remain beneath your roof if you ever allowed her to be confronted there with the base and miserable wretches who make a trade of their infamy?"

There was a dead silence for some minutes. I could see he was desperately agitated, and I didn't know what the next explosion might be. But when he spoke, it was at first in that careless, cynical way which he often puts on, and he merely answered

"Oh, you are rather fond of public speaking, I'm told, and of preaching, too."

Then he presently added, in a weary, hollow tone:

"But you are right, Dayrell, deadly right, I believe. But what next? We can't bring back the past."

"The Future may be yours, my lord," I answered. "I think the true way of getting out of our devils' torments and chains is to throw ourselves into some

noble enterprise—as you are now doing for these hag-ridden descendants of Brutus, Cato, and a few other grand old fellows."

Then a gleam of enthusiasm lighted up his eyes, and as he shook hands and rose to leave, I just said (for my heart was all on fire with love and reverence and pity strangely combined):

"I hope I haven't offended you."

"Not a bit—not a bit!" he answered, with a sort of half gay, half dismal and affected nonchalance. "You know, as I said before, I like something craggy to break upon, such as the Armenian language, or like a jolly young Puritan parson who delights in preaching purity, poetry, and Bacchanalian revels all over the World. Lord bless you, my boy, don't you know I hate your soft, mealy-mouthed Christians who've no crags and no backbone, and can't stand up for themselves and their convictions! But a fellow who believes with all his heart in το καλον and helps me to believe in it too, well, I say, God bless him—I'll love him and honour him, prickles and all, though he sting like a nettle." Then he caught my hand, wrung it desperately, poured out a huge glass of rum and water, and tossed it off, exclaiming: "Here's a health to the porcupine! Give me your bristly, thorny chaps! Bristles for ever!" and bolted out of the room.

The next day I was to leave. He was kindness itself, insisted on sending me as far as Rossena on one of his own horses with a groom, who was

to find out the chief of the Carbonari there, and as he rode off in another direction (he was then going to Count Gamba's villa) he called out, "Come again, Charlie Bacchanal! Come again." And then reining close up to my horse, he half whispered: "Remember I believe all you impudently affirm about the sweet Arcadian innocence of the early Bacchanalian revels—at least I believe you believe it. So don't fear to come again," and he turned away singing or shouting, "Come again! Come again! My sturdy Bacchanal! Evoe! Evoe! Bacchanals for ever! Hurrah!" I don't know when I have felt altogether so thoroughly upset as at that parting and at what passed the day before; and I got no rest or peace till I could sit down in my room at an inn and pour it all out, dear old friend, to you. And yet what a strange mad world of mystery it all is. Here is Byron living with another man's wife, who ought long ago to have been loosed from the bonds of her unholy marriage to that wretched old Count Guiccioli; while the attachment between her and Lord Byron, apart from their previous history, I'm certain, is as pure, devoted and beautiful, as full of blessings to each, as ever the love of man for woman in this mysterious world. Oh! my brother, help me—God help me—to understand rightly, as *He* does, all this mystery! Only of one thing I am sure, that there is simply an infinite world of goodness in that great man's soul! Enough, with God's help,

to overcome and utterly consume all the baseness that has crept into and over his life. Some day it will be known that he is an Archangel, fallen—*and* restored.

"Noble, noble, Dayrell," was all that Lady Stella seemed competent to say when the reader had finished. The rest of the party, with the exception of Mrs. Dayrell, uttered some incoherent expressions of genuine interest in the narrative. That lady was silent, evidently from some deep emotion. Presently Lady Stella said to her softly, "You loved and honoured Mr. Charles Dayrell, dear madam, I know."

The only reply the elder lady made was a murmured "Yes."

"Would that I had known him," continued Stella. "I should have been a better creature all my life. But that portrait in your dining-room gives one some slight notion of what he was—must have been."

"Ah, my dear," said Mrs. Dayrell, "it is good for a portrait, but no picture could give—— . . . . He was one of those men whose image, if a young girl had once known him intimately, even in his later life, would haunt her for years, so that all other men would seem poor and vapid, even mean."

"But I hope, dear mamma," said Ellen Dayrell, "his perfections did not make you think so of papa."

"Well, not exactly," replied her mother with

a sweet but rather sad smile. "But then you see your father was a Dayrell, and the son of my idol."

By this time spring was giving way to early summer, and the weather had become warm enough to allow of drives in an open carriage, which the invalid was permitted to take, with manifest benefit to his health. One day it was arranged that with his mother and sisters he should go to lunch at Hurstleigh Manor, and on looking wistfully from the couch they had laid for him there, in the dining-room, at the beautiful grounds outside, Stella said to him, after luncheon:

"Would you not like to take a turn in the garden? I have got a garden chair made on purpose for you. It is on the terrace, and you can be wheeled out to it at once if you like."

Her visitor was grateful and very happy. The air was delicious. His mother had thrown over him an extra wrap, and after he had been drawn round the grounds, which were lovely with flowers and foliage, picturesque velvety lawns and groups of trees, with broad winding walks between, the party halted on the smooth-shaven turf. Here beneath a splendid beech tree there was a charming view of the park, with a sheet of water glittering in the sun, where a couple of swans could be seen to advantage. Old Sir Michael Ronhead had given the visitors a hearty welcome, and accompanied them round the grounds, leaving them in due course for his afternoon ride and a little magisterial business.

Before long the young ladies from the Priory wanted to take a walk through the park to a rising ground whence a beautiful distant view of the sea could be obtained. Miss Frances could not do less than accompany them when she saw no signs of her cousin intending to do the same. But she left Mrs. Dayrell, with Stella and her monkey, in charge of the 'huntsman,' and thus satisfied her conscience in abandoning the said cousin to what might otherwise have been a *tête-à-tête.*

That good lady, however, was not Stella's mother, and was very much the mother of Wilfrid Dayrell. She could not help seeing the decided benefit which on the whole her unfortunate son was deriving from the interesting conversations he had had with the Lady Stella, as well as from her company generally; and naturally desired that benefit should be enjoyed as much as possible. Perhaps more or less unconsciously she could not help indulging in visions of her son's ultimate restoration to health and strength, and of his becoming the accepted lover of the heiress of Hurstleigh Manor.

So it happened that after a time she proved faithless to her charge, and retired to the house on the plea that "forty winks had become almost second nature" to her in the afternoon, which was quite true, and had she remained in the garden the two young people might probably have talked for an hour without her hearing a word.

Before she left, Stella had been quietly and

almost cautiously (for her cousin had made her a little nervous in conversing with young Mr. Dayrell on any topic really interesting to her) working up to a discussion on the topic that for some weeks past had been deeply interesting to her.

Dayrell soon gave her an opening.

"What a charming little beast," said he, "that familiar spirit of yours is."

"Yes, so playful and good-tempered. A much better character altogether than his mistress; aren't you, Jacky?"

"When I contemplate him and his many virtues, graces in fact, I can't wonder, Lady Stella, you have faith in Evolution. But really I don't see how that grand theory interferes in the slightest degree with belief in the doctrine, as I find it in the Scriptures, of the purely spiritual origin of the human soul."

"Dear Mr. Dayrell," replied Stella with vivacity, "Is not the afternoon too lovely for discussion on the origin of man or monkey? There is another topic very near my heart on which in this weather I should so like you to discourse."

"Name it, name it!" exclaimed Dayrell ardently.

"Some other time," said his companion, "I should very like to follow up that question of 'unde derivatum?'—is that right?—the Origin of man. But just now I want to study that wonderfully developed ape, Lord Byron. Perhaps we had better not revert, at present, to the question of religion, whether that

held by Byron, your grandfather, great-grandfather, or any of the patriarchs. Indeed your esteemed mother" (looking at Mrs. Dayrell) "would at once order me away if I approached the subject. But I do very much want to hear what you think of the views your gallant ancestor took, in that lecture on Byron, of the poet's character in relation to women, and—well, to love and that sort of thing. It is such a new idea you and Professor Minto put before us. Is it not, Mrs. Dayrell? And so infinitely satisfactory to any one who, like myself, has profoundly loved and admired much of his poetry."

Mrs. Dayrell cordially assented, but by this time the desire for rest had become paramount in that good lady's breast, and shortly after she took her departure for a season. Hereupon Lady Stella remarked, as she adjusted the little tent-like curtains to keep the sun from her companion's face:

"Your mother is a most kind-hearted lady, Mr. Dayrell, and those two young ladies, your sisters, possess superhuman excellencies. Still I'm glad they've all gone, for a while. One can't talk so nicely—can you?—about really interesting subjects, before critical witnesses. Now I must confess I have been greatly exercised about an important question which the said lecture and the lecturer's subsequent interviews with Byron raises. I don't mean the religious enigma. We'll leave that, if you please, till after the Deluge; but about his

true character, the spirit of his life, if you don't mind a little palaver on that point."

"I *am* so glad," replied Dayrell, "you like to talk about that man's real character. My mind has long been fermenting on the subject. And indeed it does me a lot of good to talk with you about it. You come like the Goddess of the silver bow, the Health-bringer."

"That is worth something," replied Stella gaily, "though perhaps not much. Yet I cannot tell you how greatly that Oriel lecture of Mr. Dayrell's helped to clear up a difficulty that had secretly oppressed me since I first began to read Byron's poems. But first tell me what you have to say to those wretched morbid repinings in Byron's poetry which excite so powerfully Carlyle's hate and contempt —all the more, I suppose, because he was so great a sinner in that way himself," and her musical little laugh expressed some scorn for both the philosopher and the poet.

"I think," replied Dayrell, "that they were wrung from him not so much by self-pity, as Carlyle says, but rather by the mourning of an exquisitely sensitive soul over the discords of a Universe, which seemed to him intended only for heavenly music and love. It was the contrast between his wonderfully strong perception of the one and of the other which caused the moaning of the great sea of Byron's soul—'the sweet bells jangled and all out of tune,' which drove

him to his sad and passionate complaints — not mere selfish, or self-centred sorrow over his own disappointments and woes. He suffered in sympathy with his fellow-creatures—with a restless and suffering Universe.

"I like that view," said Lady Stella. "Decidedly. . . But next tell me what you think about the charge of inordinate vanity constantly brought against him. I can't bear to think he was the slave of that miserable weakness."

"Nor I," replied Dayrell. "I read the riddle thus. There is a vanity which is base—contemptible —the slave of which is always thinking of himself, persuading him or herself that he or she is very clever or charming, handsome or eloquent, &c., &c. And there's something that is not seldom supposed to be vanity, but which in reality is a great craving for sympathy and love—wherein a person knowing that these are gained by the possessor of admirable and lovable qualities, or by doing noble, useful, clever, or beautiful things, is constantly hungering and striving to be and to do all this. I think I see, clear as stars on a frosty night, that Byron was filled full of that hunger, like every beautiful loving nature, not of the poor egotism of genuine vanity. Does that also please you, lady fair!"

"Immensely. Thank you very much."

"But what was your other, larger query?"

"This—I never would believe that a man who

could write as he constantly did about Love, and Nature, about Liberty and Tyranny, who was filled with such profound love for the Beautiful and such noble sympathy with the oppressed,—and above all who could give up an enchanting life in an Italian villa with such a companion—sinful though I suppose their relation was—as he had at last found, to go and die for Greek bond-slaves—that such a one could be the heartless, sensual profligate so many believe him to have been."

"Nor I. The facts quoted and referred to in that Oxford lecture, I think, amply prove the contrary. Did it not remind us that Conrad's love for Medora, so touchingly described, is full of unselfishness, and of the tenderest deepest affection. No mere vulgar passion—capricious, sensual, selfish. So with the 'Giaour,' 'Lara,' 'Selim' (in the 'Bride of Abydos'), 'Alp,' 'Manfred,' they are all depicted as deeply, devotedly, *and exclusively attached*, to one beloved object — never swerving from their loyalty to her in the midst of temptation, and whatever their faults or crimes. This is not the writing of a profligate or debauchee. How different from some recent popular poets of the swinish breed! True! in some of his writings there is a far lower tone but only as a momentary weakness, or as the passing victory of the devil over an essentially glorious but human soul. Therefore you see, dear lady Star-bright, I go with you wholly. You are not 'making-believe' there. But what then?

What is the particular knot you would untie?"

The lady hesitated a minute—then answered:

"This—that if Byron's soul had in it so much of the divine in relation to Love—as I devoutly rejoice to find you too believe,—why does he write so mournfully about it—why does he so constantly ask, or compel us to ask,

> "'Oh, Love, what is it in this world of ours
> That makes it fatal to be loved!
> Oh, why with cypress boughs hast wreathed thy bowers,
> And made thy best interpreter a sigh!'"

"Ah," replied Dayrell, "if I'm to give you any answer to this question it must be a semi-philosophical one. It is the only one I can offer you, and one that has given me relief from thoughts that torture. But won't philosophy bore you?"

Stella was leaning her head on her hand, ever and anon gazing at him furtively, while he was speaking. Her large straw hat had fallen by her side, and some of her dark auburn locks were falling round her face. She raised herself quickly and answered earnestly, "Oh no, no. *Vorwärts!*"

"My answer is not exactly mine, but that of a much wiser and better man, whose belief it was that Love is gradually developed from the low animal instinct into the tender and passionate affection which longs for companionship with the beloved one, for interchange of thought and feeling, and signs of love—which seeks to show kindness and bring joy

to the object of affection. But in all that there is often lurking intense selfishness which, if unchecked, gains terrible power, and at length destroys all genuine love. Above and beyond that stage of development there is a singularly noble and beautiful growth of love which asks for no reward, and no return—but is content and blessed with only admiring, loving, afar off, silent and alone. This is what Goethe quotes Spinoza as describing, when he says, 'If I love you what is that to you?' and again when he says 'He that loves God truly must love Him without expecting any return.' Thus also I find another wise and noble German, Lavater, saying 'He who silent loves to be with us, he who loves us in our silence has touched one of the keys that ravish hearts.' Now Byron depicts all these stages of passion and affection; but there is one more stage of development, higher, more beautiful, and blessed than any of those, and to which Mr. Dayrell referred though very briefly, as perhaps you may remember, in that lecture—the state in which the lover longs above all else to do and to be, to bear and to suffer whatever will most contribute to the welfare, the joy, the blessedness of the beloved—rejoices to make any sacrifice, to toil, to suffer, to die for the object of his love whether it be man or God—whether endowed with beauty, goodness, full of answering love, or be repulsive, sinful, ungrateful, or degraded. In the earlier stages I have been taught, I think, to see

that the existence and growth of love depend chiefly on the attractiveness or lovableness of the object, far more than on the lover's capacity for loving. But in the higher stages it is the reverse—and I think the answer to that mournful 'most musical, most melancholy' question of the great poet which you just now quoted is, that all selfishness, aye even the want of self-sacrifice, makes our love fatal to the beloved one, as well as to its own existence. And thus,

"'. . . with cypress boughs it wreaths its bowers,'

the harbingers, the angels of Death."

"But is it not very sad that such exquisite descriptions of Love as Byron gives, should so often be defiled by the relation of the lovers. When I first read that scene of the meeting for instance, of Parisina and her lover, in a selection from his writings, all heaven seemed to be opening before one. But when I came to read the whole poem—Faugh!"

"I understand," replied Dayrell. "It was the same with myself. But Lady Stella—are we not told by some of the noblest of our race that our highest happiness and true perfection are reached in loving God with a depth of fervour that no words, not even Byron's, can describe? If this be so—I don't say it is, but if it be—and if God yearns for our love, and has created us that we may thus love Him, and may attain our supreme blessedness in that love, and in loving and being

beloved by our fellow creatures, is it not worth much to be made, even by Byron, to feel and know something of what love may be? But you say Parisina and Hugo's love was sinful. The circumstances under which they loved were. Her *marriage* to Hugo's father (like the Countess Guiccioli's) was sinful. But she was the victim of cruelty and wrong —the destined bride of Hugo, snatched from him by his father—and hence came all the after-stain. And are we to reject the gold in the ore because it is embedded in dross? All good, in this world, has in some way to be extracted from evil. Think," continued Dayrell, his voice trembling a little, "of the many touching and wonderful ways in which God, if there be a God, seems to be trying to teach us how beautiful and blessed it is to love, teaching us by the mother with her child, the husband and wife, the lover and his mistress —teaching us therefore, above all, to love Him, the Fountain and Inspirer of Love. . . ."

The speaker paused—perhaps it was quite time.

And the lady at first did not seem to realize that he had come to an end, till, finding the music of his voice had ceased, she said:

"Do go on. I can't tell you what all this is to me. Pray go on. But perhaps you are tired."

"Oh, no," said Dayrell, "I only feared you might be. But I have said my say."

"Tell me one thing more, and then, perhaps, I must not keep you out here longer. People say

that all Byron's heroes, at least, his earlier ones, are so uninteresting—so one-sided, limited."

"That is densely foolish talk," exclaimed Dayrell, firing up, and inspired by his sad and lonely musings during the last few months. "It is only because they themselves are so limited and worldly-minded. Byron's Corsair, Giaour, Lara, &c., all his romantic poems set forth, in imperishable forms, the profoundly pathetic enigma of modern life. Do we not, when young, find ourselves in a wonderful Universe, which offers us every sort of attraction and joy—with sunny Hope continually brightening all our other happiness? Do we not love, admire, passionately long for, freedom and joy, beauty, love—the 'true Bacchanalian cult?' Then come bitter disappointments, cruel wrongs. We believed in Eden, and found ourselves in the Halls of Eblis. At first our hearts seem crushed. Then our love is turned to hate—those hearts are filled with fierce resentment, morbid repinings, selfish misery. We turn hither and thither, in vain, like a wild beast at bay, transfixed with torturing darts. Despair follows for a season, temptation to suicide, moral death. Is not this the history of those Byronic heroes? the meaning of all those mournful, terrible wailings, as of a lost soul? Are they not full of deepest interest? Was it not well that these awful spectres should be fairly faced and dauntlessly described? And then, over all this wild waste of waters, this stormy and

most desolate wreck-strewn sea, rises the vision of unselfish love—the living for others, self-sacrifice—bringing to us the highest joy, abiding peace, through heavenly eternal love, within and around. *This* answer to his cry of despair, Byron clearly had not found while uttering that cry—did find it partially, preached it grandly, by the closing scenes of his life—and, I trust, has long since learnt it fully, if in no other way, where one very dear to me said it alone could be fully learnt—at the foot of the Cross. There and there alone, he maintained, was the mystery of Love and of the Universe solved."

While the young man was pouring out what, in former days, Stella would have called a rhetorical rhapsody, but which was, in reality, the out-burst of long-pent-up thoughts and emotions, the lady, her eyes shaded by her hand, seemed unable to take them off his face; and when he ceased, she was evidently "softly, silently drifting along, Into a Dream-land far away," perhaps into a sunny ocean of measureless love.

It may be that the young gentleman himself, when at length he caught her gaze, if he read her face aright, was awaking, as he finished, to the deepest happiness he had ever tasted, and perhaps, also, to the most harrowing remorse.

For now that consciousness, which he had once before experienced, was again forcing itself upon him of the possible selfishness of his own conduct, of the father's probable wrath if he knew what was

going on, and the terrible thought rolled in upon him that he might have been bringing life-long evil on the one being whom, of all others, he would have shielded from every harm, on whom he would have showered the greatest blessings. Never before had he realized so vividly the lesson which the clergyman, who wrote out his fellow-student's lecture on Byron, desired to impress on him when he spoke the words to which Wilfrid Dayrell had just been referring concerning genuine unselfish love. May it not have been very like rank hypocrisy to be uttering such sentiments while directly outraging them?

But it is probably a rather common experience that we receive some great truth into our mind; recognize, perhaps warmly welcome, it as truth; wish, in a sentimental way, that we could immediately act upon it and live accordingly; then presently find that we are acting clean contrary to it, and years later discover that we are only just beginning, and in a very feeble way, to make it our natural rule of life. Yet if the good seed had not been sown when it was, we should not be even then beginning, years afterwards, to see a little corn in the ear.

But this thought in Dayrell's mind, that he might be selfishly trying to win Lady Stella's love to her lasting injury, was quickly chased away by a very different one. How could he suppose for an instant—how could he be so incredibly conceited

as to imagine that this handsome and accomplished heiress, who could have a dozen suitors at her feet any moment, would be seriously affected, or have her future prospects in the least marred, by *his* devotion to her? Whatever might have been his chances before his accident, of course it was supremely absurd to imagine he was bound now to refrain from loving her, or to conceal his regard for her, through fear of doing her the slightest harm. It is difficult at any time for a modest lover,

> "Whose heart the holy forms
> Of young imagination have kept pure,"

to believe that the girl he secretly adores can ever care for *him*. How much more, then, when he lies a crippled and disfigured sufferer, thrown aside from the stirring, glorious race of life.

But even supposing his first feeling of remorse had any justification, it was a long way off, at that time, from being "the full corn in the ear," or of having any power to lift him up to noble self-sacrifice, had it been required. Hence he went drifting on just as before, immensely happy in the present state of his relations with his "Star-Queen," in seeing his power over her, and her answering growing interest in him—very happy, and not at all anxious as to whether he might be nearing the "Rapids."

There was not much time, however, then for further reverie or reflection, for the three young

ladies returned from their ramble, and in high spirits, Dayrell's sisters vowing that the group under the tent looked "deliciously picturesque;" while Frances, in a sarcastic tone, caught from her cousin, exclaimed:

"Oh, most romantic! But what, may we venture to inquire, have you been sagely discussing all this time, ye learned Thebans?"

"Evolution," answered Stella, which was true in a spiritual sense. Then, while caressing her monkey: "Look at this lovely little being. May not his great (up to the *ninth power*) great grandson, if only all the intervening descendants are duly developed, become a Sir Philip Sidney?"

Later in the day, when the whole party were gathered in the drawing-room, prior to the departure of the visitors, Dayrell was looking out on the broad park glades from the bay window, where he had been placed at his request. The sun was setting in regal beauty, and his happiness was at its summit, when he saw Sir Michael go to the piano and talk to Miss Grey and Ellen Dayrell, who had been engaged in playing a duet, for then he beheld Lady Stella glide gently to his side.

"I have been thinking much," she said, "of what you were so sagely propounding in the garden, and of those striking words of Spinoza's and Lavater's. School friendships—how curious and romantic they are! I think they sometimes illustrate and confirm all you said. I remember passionately

loving one of my school-fellows in that strange way."

"And I too," replied her companion, "more than once. At both the schools I went to I was truly and deeply in love with a school-mate. In each case the object of my adoration was unaware of it—I loved them because they were so peaceful—restful—neither of them was distinguished for brilliant characteristics or special attractiveness of any kind—one of them in fact, called 'Pudding-head,' was indubitably stupid"—and the merry laugh which broke both from the speaker and his listener, rather scandalized one of the young ladies talking with the old gentleman.

"Yes," continued Dayrell, in a more subdued tone, "it is certainly a very pure and disinterested affection in such cases. Byron's love for his school-fellow, Lord Clare, was just an instance of it. The second object of my absorbing idolatry, also, knew no more of it than the first. I was nothing more, I believe, to either of them than any other boy. But each morning for weeks together, when I woke my first thought was, Here's another day in which to see him, speak to him, perhaps play in some game with, or be of use to, him. But certainly I asked no return. It was happiness enough to love him. . . ."

Stella raised her great dark eyes for an instant to the speaker's face with an indescribable look of sympathy and wonder, but quickly dropped them

beneath his burning gaze. Each knew in their secret soul his words described not only what both had felt in days long ago, but what they thought each might be feeling now. Then Dayrell continued rapidly—

"As for my first love, I remember how astonished he was when leaving school (we were both about twelve) at my hurriedly thrusting into his hand a, to me, priceless little glass dog, the only article of *vertu* and value I possessed, or at least that seemed worthy of his acceptance! And when he recovered from his astonishment, and in return fumbled in his pockets, drew forth an old battered silver pencil-case and gave it me with confused emotions of gratitude, didn't I cherish it tenderly, and kiss it in secret during the holidays next ensuing! Did you ever tell your love?"

"Never. Nor 'let concealment prey upon my damask cheek!' But what became of your attachments? Have you been fast friends ever since?"

"Alas, no. I have never seen either of the beloved since they and I left school. And what is worse I fear I never took any pains to do so."

"Oh fie! Men *are* inconstant ever. But then 'Pudding-head' could scarcely have been attractive in himself. It must have been your extraordinarily sentimental and romantic disposition which invested him with sweet imaginary charms, suggested by

his delicious name (hush!)—unless indeed at that time you were even more stupid than himself and worshipped him as a superior being—"

Then the laugh which had been with difficulty repressed by both, burst forth so merrily that old Sir Michael Ronhead observed with cheery sympathy, "'Pon my word, those young folks seem to have all the fun to themselves to-night." Whereupon Lady Stella continued in a stage whisper:

"You know Carlyle says there never was so great a fool but he found a greater to admire him. As regards the evanescence of those school attachments, however, I fear school-girls are just as inconstant as the boys. That's the worst of those early romantic loves, perhaps prefiguring our later delusions—they are so evanescent." (A cold chill ran through Dayrell's frame.) "But I suppose, after all, they do prove the capacity of the human heart for that divine and beautiful affection whereof your great Germans speak. Experiences of this nature help one to understand Lord Byron—and—" there the lady stopped, and looked out at the sunset.

Her companion looked at *her*, saying interrogatively, as he leant forward:

"And—ourselves?"

Mrs. Dayrell's carriage was announced and that delightful little visit came, as Stella remarked to her cousin, "like a dying dolphin, or a model Christian, to a most beautiful end."

CHAPTER X.

One morning Dayrell's elder sister told him that Lady Stella's aunt, Mrs. Grey, had returned to stay at the Manor House—that Mrs. Dayrell and herself had been to call on the lady and that the whole party from Hurstleigh were coming to dine with them the next day. That memorable event accordingly took place. It was the first time Dayrell had seen his lady love in evening costume since they had danced together one well-remembered night at a time which seemed to him now to have been before the Flood. She looked (to him at least, and was no doubt) perfectly enchanting. He could not go down with them to dinner, but she had managed to put in his hand a lovely moss rose before that entertainment was announced, and to say softly, "Don't look so disconsolate. We shan't sit long after dinner—and I have brought some music." But she did not tell him why her cousin had summoned her mother back, as a last resource, to Hurstleigh Manor—did not tell him that this kind-hearted and judicious aunt had been having a long talk with her niece that morning on a most delicate matter, viz., the state of her affections, and had set forth, vainly as it seemed, but

in the clearest manner possible, the undesirableness, inexpediency, folly, and impropriety to say the least, of engaging in a flirtation (which must inevitably lead to mischief on one side or the other) with wounded young men cut off by their misfortune from all prospect of a happy termination to such fascinating folly.

When the ladies came up to the drawing-room after dinner, Mrs. Grey took care to occupy a seat by young Dayrell's couch and to converse very kindly and pleasantly about himself, his present pursuits, hopes, and prospects. But when Stella began to play a beautiful "Thema" by Mozart, which she knew was one of his favourites, and afterwards sang "Can I forget that night in June," it was evident there was no more talk to be got out of him that night—at least by her, Mrs. Grey. It was a lovely night in June, however, at that very time, and Mrs. Dayrell invited the whole party, prior to the departure of her guests, into the garden where she said a syllabub was prepared on the lawn. Wilfrid Dayrell took leave of the company as they left the drawing-room, on the plea of necessity for early hours, and was then supposed to retire to rest. Stella came up to his couch as the rest quitted the room, and a few leave-taking words were exchanged which none but themselves and the angels heard. Had the angels, however, been capable of envy, they might perhaps have felt it then.

The shadows of evening had fallen—the drawing-

room was almost dark, though the long sweet twilight still glowed in the west. Dayrell could not persuade himself or be induced by his attendant, to leave the room. He lay behind the curtains of the bay-window as if entranced, still gazing out on the evening sky, with the words and tones of the music and of the musician to which he had been listening still lingering in his ear. Probably at length he dozed.

The carriage came to the door. Lady Stella remembered she had left her music in the drawing-room—went to fetch it—and her aunt followed her. The rest of the party remained seated on the lawn. Dayrell was dreaming of Lady Stella and her aunt and thought they entered the room—thought he heard the latter lady speaking to her niece in earnest tones, and almost weeping. He dreamed, or thought he dreamed, he heard her saying "Oh, my dear niece, you do not know what you are bringing on yourself and that unfortunate young man. This, I can plainly see, is far more than the trifling flirtation you have represented it to Frances. Why, have you not quite lately refused an offer from young Lord Edendale? No girl unless she were in love with another suitor would have done such an insane act as that." And in his dream Wilfrid Dayrell seemed to catch the very tone of contemptuous satisfaction with which Stella answered:

"My dear Aunt, if you value that young lord's happiness in any, even infinitesimal, degree, write

at once, since you have heard of his fortunate escape, and tell him when he next goes to church to return thanks that I am not to be Lady Endendale."

"Stella," replied her aunt very gravely, "I fear you are under an unhappy, a most unfortunate, hallucination which prevents your seeing either your own position or the estimable qualities of more than one excellent young nobleman in their true light. You are at present carried away both by your sympathies, your pity, as well as your cultivated intellect. I must speak plainly if for once, my dear child, you will give your dear mother's sister a mother's privilege."

Dayrell seemed now to see with that preternatural insight given in dreams, that Stella was bowing her head on her hands and listening with hushed respect.

"You have been drawn on by pity and common literary pursuits to regard this young Mr. Dayrell with an absorbing interest which no woman should feel except in a brother, a father, a husband or an accepted lover. Thinking it impossible there could ever be wedded love between you and him, you have kept no guarded watch over your affections, or considered that you might be irrevocably losing your heart to him and that you could never marry anyone else while he lives—that you were in fact flinging away the happiness of well-ordered married life, and giving all your priceless woman's love to

one who, however full of noble thoughts and feelings, and even of genius, can never be to you the companion for life which a true woman looks for in one to whom she gives her whole heart 'for richer for poorer, for better for worse, in health and in sickness, till death do you part.'"

(If Mrs. Grey had not been a dream-personage, no doubt she would have been as much surprised as her niece at the eloquence with which her natural affection had thus inspired her. But love, even in dreams, works wonders.)

Then he imagined that Stella lifted her head with a proud sweet smile on her face, and answered calmly, yet in a tone of deep feeling:

"Dear Aunt, I thank you and love you for all your kind and motherly words and feelings. You are right in thinking that of course I have not for a moment supposed there could be the poor folly called wedded life in store for that noble-hearted glorious soul to whom you refer. You are right too in thinking I have loved him with my whole heart, and have given him not indeed the priceless treasure, as you term it, of my woman's love, for it is only too poor and unworthy of him, but . . such as it is. . . Dear Aunt, you do not quite understand me. Intellectual power to me is everything. . . I have known from childhood that if ever I met a man who I felt was far above me in grasp of thought, in lofty aspiration, in flashes of insight, in poetic and creative power, felt that he towered above

and satisfied my intellect, and yet cared for my poor thoughts, my love—then no matter what his bodily condition, ugly, crippled, scarred, deformed, I should be his captive. Oh, believe me, I could give myself up to such a man, if he cared for me at all, to be his loving, devoted friend, his servant, his slave, for ever! I could kneel beside him, read, sing to him, fetch and carry for him, wait and watch for him, bear with his humours, let my whole heart and soul rest in communion with him lovingly, devotedly, for Time and Eternity. . . I *have* found such a man and he does love me . . . and I love him, for ever."

"Stella, Stella," her aunt seemed to exclaim in tones of the greatest distress, "do you think there are not such men to be met with in society full of health and youth, worthy of you, longing to secure your hand, with great careers before them——?"

"Ah, there may be such, but not *his* peers—not one I have ever met. And oh, dear Aunt, you have known what it is to love. This man, struck down in the midst of health and strength, yet full of glorious thoughts and aspirations still, gifted as no other I have ever known—he loved me before he was smitten, loves me still. Shall I desert him now? And you, you would tempt me!"

And then Dayrell thought he heard her sobbing—no other sound. Her aunt had left the room, and he knew it was no dream.

"Stella," he murmured as well as his own emo-

tions allowed, "Stella—I have heard all. I thought at first it was only a dream—I *had* been dreaming of you—now I know it was a blessed reality."

He heard her dress rustling as if she were moving towards him—the window-curtains parted.

"Dearest," he whispered softly, "was I wrong in hearing it? I could not help it. Come to me."

"No, no, not wrong," exclaimed Stella as she threw herself on her knees beside him, "not wrong. I could not have told you, but—I am—so very—glad you now know all I have felt, without my telling you."

He took her little hand and softly drew her down towards him, put his arm round her and pressed a long kiss on her lips and then on her wet eyes; and there was never a word spoken, but each felt that, come what come might, their hearts were joined and that their life must be lived in each other thenceforth—and for ever.

"Then we are not parted, broken-hearted—in the gloaming, after all!" said Stella, wiping away her tears, as she stooped to give him a farewell kiss. "Oh, what a pity!"

CHAPTER XI.

Of course a storm was gathering "after all" this, but it did not burst at once. No one but the two young lovers knew what passed that evening after Mrs. Grey had left the drawing-room. She had again been hurriedly summoned for a few days to her married daughter's bedside. So for a little time events pursued their previous course during those fair summer afternoons; and day after day for a brief period, these romantic young folks as they met and talked and read together, as the lady played and sang, and he listened silent and entranced, their foolish hearts danced for joy. For they looked together on fair flowers and trees, or up to the blue sky and floating clouds in the warmth and brightness of the still summer noon, or on lovely sunsets in the long calm summer evenings, day after day, "making believe," when friends were near, that they were not particularly interesting to each other. When circumstances prevented their meeting, there was the keen delight of knowing how they both longed to meet again, and the happiness of just that one first look into each other's eyes when they met, which they would fain permit themselves, and then the silent pressure of the hand—and then the long and interesting talks that followed. Ah! folks a-weary of the

world, of themselves, "of wedded life, and jarring strife, or vile and dull satiety," may smile or sneer at "sentiment" in general and "Love's young dream" in particular—but, except one other phase of Love, perhaps it has more in it of the taste of heaven than aught else on earth.

Dayrell was thinking something of this kind one day, when he and Stella were alone, and then saying it; and when Stella asked him what was the one exception, he answered dreamily:

"Why, I was thinking of the scene which you and my mother witnessed the other day, and of which she told me when she returned—a Golden Wedding. She described it so touchingly that the remembrance thereof forced me, rather unwillingly, to make that exception, just now. Only a true Golden Wedding, where hearts as well as hands have been joined in wedded love for half a century, can beat that dream."

Then he began writing something rapidly.

"What are you scrawling there?" asked Stella, at length.

"Only some doggerel that came into my head, just then."

"Let me have a peep."

He handed her the paper, and she read aloud:

"THE GOLDEN WEDDING-DAY."

"When Youth and Love first met on Earth,
And in a golden ring were bound,
The Angels vowed a fairer scene
In heaven itself could scarce be found.

But when by light of sunset glow,
The Angels saw Old Age and Love
Within their Golden Wedding shrined,
'Twas whispered in their bowers above

That Heaven itself were not complete
Till Love and Age were seated there;
Else Earth would have a sight to show
With which that Heaven could not compare."

"That's a pretty little conceit," said Stella, as she laid it down with a sigh.

"Then why do you sigh, dearest?"

"I suppose I was thinking what a long time fifty years was to wait for such a lovely apotheosis of mutual affection—and of what a deal might happen before we were sitting side by side, looking meek and venerable, in heaven . . . . But never mind that. I want to take this lucky chance of my aunt being afar off, and of my cousin being obliged to go to the dentist at T ——, and of your mother going to take care of her. Even tooth-ache, you see, may sometimes have a blessing in it. For I'm afraid my father is going away to the sea-side for a few weeks—the doctor recommends it—and I must go with him, and we may not have another opportunity, and it makes me a little unhappy—and ——"

"Oh, Stella,—is it possible!"

"What, that I should have a father? Yes, quite possible, and on the whole I'm not sorry, Sir Knight. Rather glad, strange as you may think it, that he wants my company, and that I can help make him happy. But . . . . then, you know I shall soon

be back again, and I shall have such a deal to tell you . . . But now, 'most potent, grave and reverend Signor,' I want to talk to you about one more work of Lord Byron's—perhaps the greatest of all. You are not weary of him yet, are you?"

"Never should be—especially if *you* talked about him."

"That's impressive. But you can't think how much all you have said and read about him and his poems has ministered to the wants of my doubting, hungering little soul. Yet I am not content. Look at this wonderful, exquisitely beautiful and most melancholy poem"—and she held up before him, "Cain: a Mystery."

"Oh, Wilfrid the wilful," she exclaimed, in an outburst of sorrowful, despairing emotion, "how truly, oh how terribly truly that Arch-fiend interprets all my trouble, and—my—atheism—if my torturing ignorance must have that name. Tell me, dearest 'guide, philosopher, and friend,' and don't look so solemn, or hate me for taking sides with Lucifer."

"Hate you, Stella, for being sad and honest,—and sincere! May the God, in whom I am sure I now believe, help me, if ever so little, to make Him known to you. It is just true souls like yours who deserve and who find the Light. You must help *me* to win it . . . . But about this glorious poem, I have thought and pondered over it for hours and days together, many a time, yet it is only of late I see light. And I have written my thoughts as you bade

me. What I find in it is a fierce protest against the false and sinful views of God which were the only ones that the poet had known—against miscalled orthodoxy—against such views as embittered your girlhood, Stella, and have made you hate the very name of Christianity. But it is far more than that."

Then he drew a little roll of MS. from his desk, and read:

"The drama of Cain seems to me the strangest possible statement of the case, as it were, against the Almighty for all the innumerable disorders, mistakes, deceptions, delusions and wrongs under which the world, the whole race of man, the animal creation, and our own tortured or guilty souls, suffer so terribly. You must remember Byron puts the worst of all those charges against God not in the mouth of a man but of a fiend. It is 'Lucifer,' the fallen 'Star of the Morning' who presses on the unhappy child of Adam all these fearful accusations against his Maker, draws out, foments, whatever evil tendencies are already germinating in the mind of Cain, but you must also note that these charges are based far more on so-called evangelical views of the meaning of Scripture than on the facts of the Universe— that those views have been deemed utterly erroneous by many of the wisest and most learned interpreters of the Bible— that they dishonour God, and contradict the deepest convictions of the souls which the Evangelicals assert are made in the image of their Maker. . . . . But my grandfather's words and thoughts have

driven me to the study of the Christian Gospels and Epistles themselves. I have considered the Archfiend's 'Case' by the light of their 'Case.' And I tell you, my Star-crowned Queen, I think that the charges, the indictment brought by Lucifer and Cain, and all the host of accusers from their day down to John Stuart Mill, Renan, and Herbert Spencer, against the Maker and Ruler, if there be one, of the Universe (remember that 'Diabolus' means the 'SLANDERER') are absolutely unanswerable if those New Testament histories are not true. Only in that sublime revelation of God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, of His endowing Man with free-will, and in His overcoming all the evil which that free-will produces by love and self-sacrifice, only in that grand revelation of the Son of God coming to earth, living and dying to redeem us all from selfishness and sensuality, to raise us out of our animal condition and help us rise to a spiritual life of Love, holiness, and joy, can we, as far as I see, understand either God, or ourselves, or the Universe. The histories may be false. There may be no such loving All-Father, and divine Son as they represent—or no such revelation has been made, and the greater part of the stories and epistles in the New Testament may be founded on delusion, or deceit. But if that be so I have no answer to give either to Lucifer, or Cain, or Mill. I freely acknowledge the sovereignty of the devil over at least half the realm of Being, and hail him as a co-equal Power with God."

Stella took the ardent enthusiast's hand as he finished, and looked anxiously in his somewhat troubled face, as if trying, but in vain, to mould her thoughts in words.

"Dearest," she said, "do not be unhappy about this 'coil of thought.' Let us hope. Have you written any more?"

So presently he continued thus:

"When we can believe that we really are children of a Great, Wise, Good and *perfect* Creator—children, remember—therefore made in His image and therefore endowed with free-will which He respects so pathetically—when we see and realize the glorious truth that only in unselfish, self-sacrificing love can we find life and abiding joy, purity and peace; then, but never before, we read the full and wholly sufficient answer to the complaints of Cain and his 'diabolus' teacher! then, only, we find the clue to all the terrible mysteries and even appalling contradictions, not merely in the world around but in Byron's life and poetry, and in our own souls. It is only in the gospels (especially in St. John's), I begin to see a revelation of God as Love, and of His Son as the primal ideal archetype of man, as the full revelation of God to Man. We have that revelation, given alike at Bethlehem, in Galilee, on Calvary, and on the Mount of Ascension, in all the manifestations of what is called the Kingdom of God during the Lord's ministry in Palestine, especially in his victory over that

death of agony and shame as the complement and explanation of all those other revelations made to us by pestilence and famine, by the hospital and the mad-house, by the rattlesnake and the thunderbolt, by the relentless cruelty of Nature, by all the devilish passions and all the unutterable agonies of the human heart, and by the last Destroyer, Death. Evil we can understand as necessary for the growth of the noblest virtues, and therefore of the highest happiness, as necessary for heroism, fortitude, self-sacrifice. Error and Sin also we can understand to be the inevitable consequence and accompaniments of Free-will—if—" and the young man raised his voice a little, speaking as if he were engaged in mortal combat with some unseen foe—"if Love be triumphant alike over Evil and Sin, and over Death besides. Not otherwise."

When he leant back and put down his MS., Stella, after a pause, said softly:

"Wilfrid, you tell me you like me to keep on playing, and I've told you more than once your voice is like music. If you are not tired, please go on."

"I thank God I can give you any pleasure. But is it only 'as one who can play skilfully on an instrument?' Will you not tell me if you can agree with my thoughts?"

"Oh, my beloved, I think it is all very beautiful," replied Stella, "and I wish I could say it was all quite true. But it may be; and what you urge

about evil coming from our having free-will and from the Creator respecting that free-will, is an immense help to me. At all events what you preach is very different from what I have been used to hear. Only I cannot say, and mustn't pretend to say, that at present I know enough of the New Testament to tell whether you or the fire-and-brimstone divines are nearest to what it teaches. And I noticed, of course, that even you spoke as if you were by no means sure that your vision was the right one."

"Yes, indeed—I am only a seeker. Here is a little more that I see I have written—'The New Testament may be a mere collection of dreams and delusions; the work of impostors lying for the glory of God, or self-deceived enthusiasts, venting the heated imaginations, or magnifying the preposterous traditions, of a superstitious and fanatical age, an age gone mad in its beliefs and visions without rhyme or reason, developing the noblest dreams of humanity from the hard, selfish and narrow bigotry of Judea. All I affirm is, that if this be so, if the events there recorded of Christ's entry into the world as the Son of God and the Son of Man, of his mighty works and agonizing death, and glorious victory over that agony and death, of his subsequent triumphs when working through his apostles, are not facts but 'inventions,' and that for eighteen centuries the Christian church has lived and worked in a faith that is folly and a belief that is a lie,

then I repeat, there is no answer to Lucifer, no adequate explanation of the existence of pain or of the mystery of Sin—of Life in Death or of Death in Life.'"

"Nor, I suppose you would say," rejoined Stella, "of the existence of the Christian Church in the time of the Roman empire, when Christians went to the flames or the lions, nor indeed any sufficient explanation of the suffering of Christian Martyrs in any age."

"Just so. The Cross without the Resurrection, like every other infernal deed done on our planet, would have been simply an unintelligible, useless horror, and all that grew out of it, as recorded by Evangelists and Roman historians, a mere dance of maniacs. The two combined give the solution of the whole problem of evil, sin, and death. For on the one hand we can understand—the history of eighteen centuries *shows*—how sin and evil can be conquered by love, and by love only while man's will remains free:

> "The many waves of Thought, the mighty tides,
> The ground-swell that rolls up from other lands,
> From far-off worlds, from dim Eternal shores,
> Whose echo dashes on Life's wave-worn strands—
> This vague dark tumult of the inner sea
> Grows calm, grows bright, O risen Lord, in Thee."

"Those are grand lines," said Stella. "Are they your own?"

"I would they were. They are in a noble hymn by Mrs. H. B. Stowe. But on the other hand," con-

tinued Dayrell, "if Sin, Evil, and Death conquered on Calvary, then *they* are triumphant, and we must bow down in worship before the devil. Cain was the true worshipper, and Abel only a deluded rebel or superstitious slave. I do not presume, of course, to say that those who cannot agree to this view are senseless dolts—but I am sure they are unscientific—as false to the great principles of Science, which they profess to worship, as those philosophers who deny the existence of a God."

"False to scientific principles!"

"Yes, for on what does all scientific truth and progress depend? Not on positive certainty, for in an indisputable sense we are all Agnostics with regard to the Universe. None of its facts and laws are really and certainly knowable. We do and can know nothing but what passes in our own minds. The greatest scientific philosophers, discoverers—Bacon, Newton, Laplace, Kepler, Faraday—can only suggest what seems to them the best working hypothesis, the most probable theory, to account for the various phenomena. And they are accounted unscientific, irrational, who reject the Law of Gravitation, or the theory of Eclipses, because only those theories best solve the various mysteries with which they deal, and are but theories after all. By the same argument I tell you, Lady Stella, these Agnostics and opponents of Christianity must be marked as false to scientific reasoning for rejecting the only working hypothesis, the only theory, that

really meets the vast and wonderful phenomena which we encounter in the Universe, and in the history of the Christian Church."

"But perhaps Messrs. Comte, Spencer, Huxley and Co. may object that the Theistic and Christian theories do not best solve the mysteries. . . ."

"True—and some philosophers said the same of Newton's theory of the fall of the apple, and even that of the planetary spheres, the rotundity of the earth, &c. But Newton and Galileo are now regarded as more correct in their reasoning than their opponents. Better theories and working hypotheses regarding all supposed scientific truths than those now held by scientific philosophers may some day be propounded. Molecular action, protoplasm, and so forth, may one day be discarded and ridiculed, like the Ptolemaic system and phlogiston. Yet loyalty to scientific principles requires us to accept those hypotheses which *for the time being* seem best to explain the various phenomena in question."

"Then the whole of the bother turns on the amount and weight of evidence."

"Undoubtedly, *and*—mark this, and—on the impartiality with which that evidence is examined and received. Some devoted scientists may be biassed against Theistic theories and Christianity, and deal with the evidence not quite impartially. . . ."

"*Et vous?*——"

"Have certainly not been much biassed in favour of either Theism or the Christian cult in recent

years. But, while lying on this couch, and looking at all the phenomena of Life and the Universe and the history of Christianity since Tacitus and Pliny first noticed it, I can find no theory that meets all the facts but one. *Voilà tout.*"

Stella was sitting on a low stool beside Dayrell's couch, and had laid her head on the cushion beside him during his last remarks. As he finished she raised herself up and looked in his face with so strange and sad a smile that he was as much puzzled as pained, and clasped her hand in his. Presently she said:

"Then, dearly-beloved priest, according to Byron's description of their respective characters, scepticism, and faith, I am the sceptical, wicked Cain and you are the believing, virtuous Abel. I hope I am not to be your murderer."

"If you are as unlike Cain as I am unlike that primal virtuous shepherd, Abel, dearest, I can't be in much danger. But I rather think you differ in a slight degree from Cain. For remember that, so far, you have given me LIFE *through love*—not death. And is it not deeply interesting and somewhat curious to see how this great poet, more or less unconsciously, under the influence, possibly, of a divine inspiration and guidance, preaches the same grand doctrine in many other poems which is taught even in 'Cain' by that lovely creature, 'Adah'—viz., that Love is the great redeeming power in the Universe? And therefore it is that the world has felt so deep an interest in

those poems. It would seem as if Byron continually wanted, though, perhaps (as I've said before) half unconsciously, to preach the sublime truth that pure Love hallows, purifies, reconciles all things and all beings. Hence he plunges his heroes into guilt—and into terrible suffering as the consequence of guilt—and yet evokes our deepest pity for them, because they love so intensely——"

"And thus," interjected Stella, "makes us feel that they cannot be all evil, cannot in fact *belong* to evil, or the Evil One."

"Just so, and makes us also feel that assuredly they must at length be redeemed from all evil and sin—and suffering."

"Yes, yes," said Stella with hands clasped in a kind of dreamy rapture. "I do like that, oh, so much."

"Could you not almost find it in your heart to pray for them, Stella? pray that they and all sinning, suffering, loving hearts, may at length be purified, redeemed, and unfolded in a higher, nobler, more beautiful life for evermore?"

"At least you and Byron give me another and a very powerful reason for longing to find the Being to whom I *may* thus pray."

"And that seems to me," said Dayrell, "to have been very much the attitude of Byron himself in these matters—panting for the freedom that has no bounds, for the love that knows no change, for the life that has no end. Then when the inevitable dis-

appointment comes, and the reaction overwhelms the unhappy aspirant,

"'Half dust, half Deity—alike unfit to sink or soar,'

the reign of Satire and Sarcasm supervenes, the fashion of making mock at all sentiment, all lofty or genuine passion, the age of *persiflage* and indifference, of parody and burlesque."

"But, oh," pleaded Stella, for she feared her lover was fashioning a cap to fit her own head, "is not that also needed to expose and destroy the works of the devil who lets loose the fiends of Cant, and Humbug, Superstition and Hypocrisy upon a suffering race?"

"Aye, verily!" exclaimed Dayrell. "Oh, what a world of poisonous rot and rubbish needs to be cleared away by those beneficent, albeit uncomely scavengers of civilized society! But it was not in their besoms or ash-pits that I meant Lord Byron found his true and perennial refuge—though once and again he stooped to them like a dove 'lien in the pots'—nor that to which he leads his votaries, or you know that I should hardly have said your attitude of mind suggested a likeness to his. No, Lady Silver-Star, it is because he is always seeking a refuge from the baseness of men and from his own lower nature, from the misery of disappointed hopes and dreams, in the calm, sweet beauty of nature, in her grandeur and loveliness, or in the lofty thoughts which the long roll of past ages breeds, that I feel he, too, was seeking God, and, like you, was longing, hoping, one day to rest in the Divine.

He had, indeed, no clear vision of the all-conquering, only of the suffering, love; and not even of the sublime, unselfish, self-sacrificing nature of all true love. I do not claim for him (any more than for myself) a real, practical knowledge of the meaning either of the Cross or the Resurrection. I only say he searched, longed, passionately prayed for it, even as we do, Stella, though it may be we do not yet know to whom to pray, and even though we expect no answer. And therefore I feel sure that in that other world behind the stars he has, ere now, found the light and the love with which the Heavenly Father, if we have one, must ever be longing to fill His children's hearts. But there over the hill I see the carriage coming back. They will soon be here and you will leave me——"

"As I have often done before," quoth Stella, rising and taking his hand; "and—come back to you again. How could I live now without seeing, talking with you? You little know what you have been, are, to me, Wilfrid Dayrell. Do you doubt my word—my faith?" said Stella, seeing the melancholy look which gleamed through all the love with which he was regarding her.

"No, dearest, no," replied Dayrell, "not for one single instant. But a strange presentiment comes over me—I cannot explain it, nor get rid of it."

"Then, my beloved," said Stella, kneeling down beside him and speaking in a low, earnest tone, "let me whisper these last words which are to be

with you till we meet again, and after that, for ever and a day. Nothing in all the world around us, or in my own life and soul, has given me so deep a conviction and so strong an impulse in the direction you desire as your love for me and mine for you. If there be a God, and His name be what your Scriptures tell you—Love—and if, as they also say, He asks us to love Him, I think you must be right in saying that He formed us thus to love one another—not alone to make us blessed, but also in order that we might understand something of His nature, of His love for us. Oh, my beloved puritan-poet, if indeed it be as you hope and pray, can we wonder that these human hearts of ours should be able to feel such passionate love, and reveal to us what it means—what it can bestow? Blessings be with you. One last kiss—Good-night."

The carriage drove up to the door. Mrs. Dayrell alighted, Stella joined her cousin, and she and Dayrell thought they were parting only for a day or two at the longest. It is curious what mistakes are sometimes made on such occasions.

Dayrell lay awake half the night, sometimes lost in an ecstasy of happiness—sometimes oppressed with sadness for which he could scarcely account.

While they were together, remembering her manner and conduct in former days, he had sometimes feared that he might be irreparably alienating or offending his Star-Queen by his decisive, almost imperious, assertion of what he believed to be great

and important truths. Yet, then again, he could not but remember that the more earnest and decided he had been, the kinder, gentler and happier, of late, she seemed to become. "The former things had passed away," he thought, and it was hardly through fear of having offended Lady Stella that his spirits sank in the hour of darkness, or that some coming evil loomed gigantic through the gloom.

CHAPTER XII.

That night Stella, also, was keeping vigil, for she was writing and thinking far into the early hours, and her lover would have been confirmed in the impression just mentioned, as he lay on his bed looking up at the stars, could he have peeped over her shoulder and read the first page she wrote.

Lady Stella to Wilfrid Dayrell, Esq.

"I cannot sleep to-night, my own, without writing to you my deepest thanks for all you have been saying and reading to me—not this evening only. I don't know how it is, but you seem to take all the pride out of me when I listen to you. You make me feel so humble, even ashamed of myself, and I begin to see that this is good for me. But though at first it was painful, now I rather like to be made humble—at least by you. I don't think that *anybody else* had better try—not at present. . . . But I want to say one thing more before we meet again in regard to what we were talking about. And as my father has proposed a long ride to-morrow, and the next day wants me to go with him into T——, when he takes the chair at Petty Sessions, I shall send you a letter instead of coming myself for a day or

two. But I want to say this. Have you ever read anything of Auguste Comte's philosophy? because I have—a little. And his views, as far as I understand them (although that, I grant, is not saying much), seem to me rather fascinating. He recognizes the great need for man of religion, of worship, yet feels as I have done so painfully the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of discovering a personal God to adore. Yet he does invite us to the worship of Humanity, and, in a certain way, of Woman. He would cultivate our faculty of adoration, not starve or destroy it—else I should abhor him. Is there not much to be said for his philosophy and religion? Now, dearest, I pray you do not urge me to say more at present than this—that I cannot and will not do otherwise than cultivate and cherish those glorious faculties of our nature which lead us to look upward in adoration and love—that I will keep them bright and fresh with devout religious life until I cease to love you or you care no more for me. Only instead of the worship of woman—(none of whom, nor the whole sex combined, I could deem so much above myself as to warrant the humility needed in religious worship)—I shall find sufficient satisfaction for *my* religious nature in the worship of Man. . . . Now do not smile contemptuously. Do not think, Wilfrid, I am trifling with a grand and solemn subject. At present you are my life, my love, my inspiration, refuge, guide. Looking up to you, in your company alone, I feel humble, and in

earnest, and at peace. Oh, what more can I need? My whole mind and soul and being are yours, and in you I find all I need. It is my happiness to know your superiority, to feel and know that you are greater, wiser, nobler than myself. In your life, your love, I live and love for evermore. . . .

"And why should you or any one regard me as erring and deceived in thinking, feeling thus? Least of all, why should they shudder at it and call it blasphemy? If Comte was held blameless, nay has been honoured and followed by good and honourable men, for proclaiming the worship of Humanity or of woman—if his disciples are admitted into good society, regarded as worthy, excellent people, not shrieked at as Atheists or blasphemers—if leading Scientists and philosophers who can neither believe in nor discover a personal God, are honoured and trusted everywhere—oh, how can it be wrong for me when I have found one bit of Humanity who fulfils my ideal of that which is noblest in intellect, in inspiration, and in love, if I am satisfied to worship him? Is not that better than to be reaching vainly forth into the Infinite for what I fear I never can find or know or love as I know and love you? You are a real, living, loving being. All the dreams of Greek, Jewish, Christian worshippers are but 'vain imaginations' at present it seems to me, shadowy fancies, spectral illusions. But you—though you haunt my dreams, are, thank God, a reality.

"Look at most of the church-goers whom we have

known—most of the religious people of your acquaintance. Are they not moved to their devotions far more by fear than by love or worship ?—a desire to propitiate some inexorable Judge or offended and wrathful Ruler ? Is it not rather a superstitious fear than a loving, filial reverence and adoring worship for the great, the good, the beautiful, the true —a base craving to be protected *from* God, not to come *to* Him—that fills your churches and conventicles and bows the knee of innumerable multitudes even in their solitary or family prayer ? But after all, how are we to believe that this resentful, dangerous Being whom the Christians call their God, and whose wrath could be averted only by the sufferings and death of His innocent son, is a bit more real than Zeus or Osiris ? And when Byron or you invite me to worship Nature in all her glorious majesty and loveliness, I answer that my heart and soul craves for a personal god or goddess, and that if I could believe there were such a sweet and gracious being now living on earth or in heaven as the Catholic goddess, I would far sooner worship her and bow down before Raffaelle's Madonna, than the Christian's God. I do but repeat your own words.

"But there is no such being. And therefore again, I say, it is a person, a real, living, strong-willed, yet large-hearted personal being, full of love and thought, before whom alone I can bow. You may be so far above me that you can see and adore One whom my eye cannot reach. Earnestly I hope it is so, else

you would be without an object of worship, for *I* am below you, and though there have been men whom you could worthily worship, they are dead and gone for ever. None such are living now, or if they live I know nothing of them. Beloved, till I, 'by searching can find out God,' be thou to me instead of the Unknown, the Unknowable God."

* * * * *

Those who have never experienced the intoxication of a first deep, passionate love, or who have lived till they have forgotten what they once felt, and those who have never known the longing, the glorious impulse to adore, will treat that letter as sheer madness. And perhaps it was. Yet a madness that has been shared by millions since Adam and Eve walked and worshipped and wooed in Eden.

"But a brief madness?"

"Yes—for *Amor*, as well as *Ira*, 'brevis furor est.'"

When Dayrell first read this letter, there was a strange commingling in his mind of intense delight and pain, but the latter was predominant. The oftener he read it (and for an hour he did scarcely anything else) and the more he pondered over it, the more unhappy he became. It seemed to him simply terrible that this high-minded, large-souled girl he loved so deeply, should be looking up to him just as he was trying, beginning to look up to some Being of perfect goodness, wisdom, power, and love—the omnipotent Creator of the infinite starry

worlds and Ruler of the Universe — a miserable thought that she should have only him to meet the longing of her noble spirit, her woman's heart— only him for worship and help, for guidance, consolation and rest.

"How could I," he wrote that day in his journal, "full as I now begin to see myself of vile selfishness, worthlessness, imperfection of every kind, burdened with morbid miseries and weakness, bodily and mental, seeking vehemently myself to find some One on whom to rest, to whom I could look for guidance, purification, forgiveness and peace — how could I be to her what she so deeply needed, or ever satisfy her glorious far-reaching aspirations? And what would be her misery when she awoke from this delusion, and lived to see me as I really am, when her idol is shattered in the dust and discovered to be but of clay?"

Well might Wilfrid Dayrell ask himself how could he answer this letter—how could he meet the writer —what could he say when they met?

But events were preparing while he was thus agitated that would remove the *venue* of that trying business into another court than that in which Dayrell was expecting an issue.

As Stella had said in her letter, her father had invited her to ride with him the day following her last visit to Aldclyffe Priory, for he thought he could probably best say his say to her on horse-

back, and at all events if things became unpleasant, a good canter or gallop would relieve the tension of the hour. So in due course he opened fire—told Stella that his sister, Mrs. Grey, had written to tell him that she had refused Lord Edendale, and had intimated to him that a state of things had come to pass between her and young Dayrell which filled him with amazement and disgust. Had the young man kept his health, and not been crippled for life, of course there would have been no objection, though she might have the pick of the county, the peerage, or of the West-end for the matter of that. But young Dayrell was of a good family, had money, would have more, and he himself was not the man to interfere with a girl's fancy where all that was right. But since it had pleased God to visit the poor fellow with such a misfortune, it was alike impious, base and unmanly of him to try and gain any girl's affections, most of all a girl who was being courted by such men as young Edendale and scores besides. . . .

Stella heard him with seeming patience and respect (though her horse fidgeted a good deal) until he stopped to take breath, and then merely said :—

"I am sorry to have displeased you, sir, but really I think I am the best judge of my own conduct in a matter of this description. I believe I am of age?"

Whereupon the old gentleman naturally waxed

very wroth. Rather high words ensued. Both Sir Michael and Lady Stella felt their speeches were unbecoming, and for a short time they preserved a gloomy silence. Then Sir Michael exploded with mingled resentment and fierce indignation, hissed out between his teeth, "I'd rather see you in your coffin, madam, than married to a cripple like that," and clapped spurs to his thorough-bred so vehemently that a less-practised rider would have probably been flung to the ground with the plunging which ensued. Stella was for a moment a little alarmed. But it all ended in what she at any time specially enjoyed, and which was now a great relief, viz., a rattling gallop. The grooms on coming to take the horses, found to their surprise that their master and young mistress had brought home their steeds, contrary to all approved rules of good horsemanship, in what, as they described it, would have been a "thundering lather," but for the animals' fine "condition."

Dinner was passed in sullenness and gloom, and except for the presence of poor Frances, would have been insupportable. That young lady, when she went up with her cousin to the drawing-room, amiably tried to make peace, but soon found as she expected that she was in sad disgrace herself. Both retired early to rest. The rest was not for long.

As the great turret clock sounded midnight, there was a noise of hurried feet in the passages, and slamming of doors. A groom was saddling a horse

in hot haste, and soon clattering down the park drive, headlong in the dark, for the doctor.

Sir Michael Ronhead had been taken suddenly ill in his room just before going to bed, which he had been later than usual in doing, and the whole household were roused from their first sleep in consequence.

Lady Stella, pale, yet self-composed, was quickly at her father's bedside, using fomentations, watching his livid face, taking his cold hand, or trying to whisper soothing words into his ear. But she had no large store of these, nor did her cousin seem much more competent, and both looked often and anxiously at their watches, and listened for the distant sound of carriage wheels. After a delay that seemed interminable, the doctor came, pronounced it a very grave case at Sir Michael's time of life, and ordered prompt application of remedies. When he left at early dawn, and met Lady Stella, who was waiting for him in the hall, he was startled at the change a few hours of watching and distress had wrought in her countenance. In accordance with her request, conveyed as a suggestion, he promised to telegraph at once, not only to her aunt, but also to Sir ——, one of the great London surgeons, and admitted that this was a desirable step.

In the course of the morning she had to go into the "Justice's Room," where, besides magisterial papers and "Burn's Justice," her father kept all his hunting and fishing tackle, gardening tools, &c.

The room looked desolate, but every object called up a rush of memories of bygone days—of his exceeding kindness and affection from the time when she first came to the park with her mother, as "a wee toddling thing" of three years old—the remembrances of how he had always been bringing her presents, from the delightful rocking-horse of the nursery to the beautiful creature she was riding only yesterday—how he had provided her with masters and governesses, and arranged parties, big and little, for her, at home and in London—thoughts of how he had indulged and petted her, comforted her in some of her childish troubles, and, with her, sobbed at her mother's grave. More wretched than ever but once in her life before, she sank into a chair, gazing with dim eyes at the objects around her. On the table lay his riding whip and gloves, a dog-whistle, a brace of "couples" for hounds, his large pruning-knife. As she looked at them, and felt the aching pain at her heart, which most people know too well, what would she not have given then to hear that which had sometimes caused her much pain, his hearty cheery voice laughing at her, scolding her—or even as she had heard it the day before in that sad ride. Could she but see him now on his favourite nag, giving a lusty "view-halloo" as "in the olden time." . . . And there was his cricket bat in the corner, which in spite of his years he had been using vigorously in the park only a few days before, to amuse a party of

youngsters. . . . What mattered his transient scoldings and caprices now!

But his anger against her for resisting his appeal in regard to Wilfrid Dayrell, and which had in all probability caused his sudden illness, mattered a great deal. Her aunt arrived in the course of the day, by the same train that brought the London surgeon, and as they came to the Manor House in the carriage sent to meet them, that good lady, being questioned by the great man, hinted at the distress which the sufferer had felt when she spoke to him about his daughter's attachment to young Dayrell, and which she feared might be the cause of the present attack. The result of a careful examination confirmed this view of the case. The great man remained all night; and as her father the next day had sufficiently recovered consciousness, and could utter a few words, Stella was told that if she could yield in any way to his wishes, and comply with the demands he had made upon her, it might be the means of saving bis life.

It was a terrible moment for the poor motherless girl. Her aunt, her cousin, the medical men all looking to her to speak a word which she felt might be no less fatal to one whom she loved as she had never loved before, as she never dreamed it would be possible to love, than silence might and probably would be to her father.

She had come into his room, and was standing by his bedside looking at him with deep sorrow

and pity, when he turned and looked at her. His hand lay on the coverlet, and she took it up tenderly in her own. But he drew it feebly yet impatiently away, casting a look at her so full of reproach and yet of tenderness that it gave her a keen throb of exquisite pain.

What next happened will be best learned from passages in the following letter:

"*Lady Stella to Wilfrid Dayrell, Esq.*"

[The first portion described the events recorded above, and a conversation which she had just had with her aunt. Then she continued thus:]

"Would that I might just come and kneel beside your couch, dearest, for a few minutes, and tell you all my trouble, and hear your loving words of comfort and wisdom! . . . I have no one to go to for comfort or guidance, to tell me what I ought to do—what is right . . . Oh, Wilfrid, I am so utterly alone—alone. But I could not come even to you for your advice, for I know you would wholly sacrifice yourself—and—me—to what you would say was my duty to my poor father. And so I could not trust you . . . Have I not a duty to you as well as to him? Yet he may be dying, and his only hope of life may be my consenting to do what you once told me would be your death-warrant—and then I SHOULD be Cain,—your murderer. Oh, what shall I—what ought I—to do? Is there no one in all this wide world, this Universe, that will take pity

on me and tell me? . . . I cannot sleep, and it gives me a little peace to be writing to you, my own. . . . Do you remember all you said to me the last time we met, in that sweet twilight (ah, it seems now so long ago, and I can hardly believe I was once so happy)—what you said to me about love hallowing all human actions and events? I see in so many things now how true that is. It alone can sanctify the relation of the sexes, and the daily intercourse of family life. The family meals, the mere act of eating and drinking, I have heard you say, may be hallowed, be made sacramental (a strange thought to me), if those meals are prepared with affection, and partaken of in love. I think, too, I have heard you say that while to endure insults and wrongs quietly through fear is base, yet to suffer them in love is beautiful and blessed. So again, to endure sorrow and suffering calmly (and with what divines call resignation), from mere stoical apathy or stolid indifference, is the sign of a mean and somewhat degraded character; while to suffer in serene peace through a spirit of devoted trust and love towards Him whom you call your God, would be triumphant, noble, nay, sublime. Yes, I can see all this now as I never used to understand it, that Love refines, elevates, raises us above mere animalism—that it is the mightiest agent in that evolution of the soul from matter and dust, which is the crown and fulfilment of our heart's deepest longing and most passionate desires. . . .

"But, Wilfrid, see now the terrible riddles of this torturing rapture, this tragi-comedy, called life. Is it not the deepest, tenderest love of which my foolish woman's heart is capable, that now is rending my very life, soul and body asunder? Love for you—love for him who has been to me the kindest father . . . . Forgive these tears, beloved—I did not mean they should blot the page—but I am alone, and desolate. . . .

* * * * *

"I could write no more last night, but a little crying, dearest, did me good, and I went to sleep, and dreamt that my mother, robed in heavenly white, came from among the stars, and gave me such a loving kiss, and it breathed peace into my heart. Should not God have done this, if there be a God? Perhaps He did. Then I awoke refreshed—but, alas! no clearer vision of duty had come to me from that vision, nor from the stars. . . . Then some time in the forenoon my aunt came and said my father would be able to see me if I went to him. He could not speak to me at first, but he took my hand and looked at me with something of the old tender kindness of the days when I was a child. And I knew and felt in my inmost soul that all he was thinking and had said in this sad business was the outcome of his true affection for me. At last he said in a feeble, hesitating voice: 'Stella, dear, promise me you will give up visiting that young man.' Had he said no more, I could have promised him, for that would

not have put an end to all intercourse between us. But before I could reply he added: 'Promise me you will give up seeing him.' His poor hand clasping mine, trembled so sadly, and his white lips quivered, and the dear voice that used to be so cheery, came out feebly, tremulously. . . . I stood looking at him for two or three moments, and then I said: 'I promise you, father, I will not see him for twelve months.' And he pressed my hand and looked at me kindly, and turned away saying, 'Thank God' . . . but for the moment my heart seemed broken.

"On leaving him I went for a long, long walk, and when I came back and was alone in my room, I thought, dearest, how soon a year will pass away, and how much there is you may do in that time, and that perhaps at the end of it my father may see matters in a very different light. If in the course of that time you should recover health and strength, either he would not oppose our union, or I should feel he was doing wrong, and I should have power to resist what I knew was evil. If you still remained my wounded, suffering knight, he could not then righteously condemn me if I chose to be your nurse as long as you liked to keep me in that situation. . . . Ah, I should be so happy in it, and want no other joy except that of varying my attendance on you by comforting and nursing the old women in our village, and 'setting on' the young women in the right way they should go. How many

a Sister of Mercy has gone through life rejoicing in her loveless and monotonous lot!

"And then, dearest, you know you will have time during this twelvemonth quarantine to write a wonderful novel, or that fascinating dramatic poem, the mere sketch of which, when you described it to me years ago, thrilled me through and through in a way I did not like at the time to confess (I used to be such a proud little minx, you know). Oh, you must do *something* to show the world that you really are the extraordinary genius and shining light which I, poor silly maiden, have been wheedled into imagining you. If you don't, who knows but I may meet, in my restless roamings, with some abler wit, some brighter brother-constellation even than you, and straightway forfeit my allegiance to the dear liege lord of my heart and soul! Oh, dear master, forgive the folly of your poor Sister of Mercy, and think of it as a small relief to my sorrowing spirit. For in truth I do need some balm for my hurt mind. . . ."

And there the poor girl paused, for she felt she ought to be giving him comfort, not asking sympathy for her heart-ache from him. So she added all the cheering, hopeful thoughts she could muster, and among other things said:

"But you know we can still write to one another sometimes. And could you not paint another beauful picture which would take the sight-seeing world again by storm? I saw you had been having your

paint pots and brushes about you the other day. Oh, do try if you cannot sit up to an easel. Paint a companion picture to the last. Let it be another 'In the gloaming,' showing how in the soft blessed twilight this time, they were not 'parted' but behind the bay window curtains, came together, and were one in deep true love for evermore. . . . For I am thine own—beloved, in weal or woe—weak and worthless as the property be. Fare thee well. My father has just been ordered to leave home and go to the south coast for a few months, which will perhaps make it less painful for both of us, than if we remained so near and yet could never meet. I will send you my address. Do not write to me till I write you again, and then, in Mrs. Hemans' nursery rhyme—

"'Oh, say that you love me still.

"STELLA."

When Dayrell read this letter he felt utterly prostrated. With his usual tendency to take gloomy views of things in general and immensely exaggerate the importance of everything in particular, the sentence of separation for twelve months now passed on him, seemed, in his enfeebled condition, equivalent to an order for the "Happy Despatch." His mother became seriously alarmed at his condition and sent for the doctor. At length her son remembered and realized the fact that he was not forbidden to write to her, nor she to him, though perhaps the correspondence should be carried on only at rather

long intervals. And when he did write, he had grace to feel, as his lady-love had done on her part when writing to him, that he must take a cheerful, hopeful tone, and must bear in mind that she needed all the comfort he could give her under the far greater trouble she was in, from her father's critical condition, as well as from her enforced separation from himself. Whether he could overcome the habits of years, for this purpose, by an effort of will was another question.

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